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ABSTRACT

These eight papers focus on connections beyond the foreign language classroom. They include the following: (1) "Intercultural Communities: Rethinking Celestin Freinet" (Helene Gresso and Lara Lomicka); (2) "Beyond the Foreign Language: Making Connections Through Recorded Oral Histories" (John Chaston); (3) "Information into Action: Ideas for the Business Language Class" (Judith Rusciolelli); (4) "Service-Learning and Foreign Language Acquisition: Working with the Migrant Community" (Susan Wehling); (5) "Paving the Way for a Successful Study Abroad Experience: A Cross-Cultural Orientation Model" (Lola Hidalgo Calle and David Alley); (6) "Connecting Beyond the Classroom: Using the Internet to Conduct Independent Study Language Courses" (Carolyn Lally); (7) "Academic Alliances and Articulation: Communicating across Educational Sectors" (Clara Krug and Anne Fountain); and (8) "Foreign Language Instruction and Block Scheduling" (Linda Wallinger). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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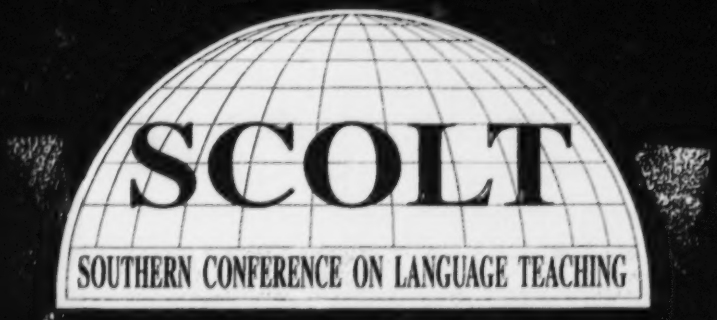

Connections Beyond the Foreign Language Classroom

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David Alley and C. Maurice Cherry
Editors

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Review and Acceptance Procedures
SCOLT *Dimension*

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in the proceedings volume of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) actually begin with the submission of a proposal to present a session at the SCOLT Annual Conference. If the members of the Program Committee accept the proposal, presenters are contacted by the editors and invited to submit an article for consideration for publication in *Dimension*, the annual volume of conference proceedings.

Only those persons who presented, in person, at the annual Joint Conference are eligible to have a written version of their presentation included in these annual Proceedings. Presenters first submit an abstract of their article, which is read and considered by the editors. Copies of the publication guidelines are sent to the presenters whose abstracts are accepted. Prospective authors submit five copies of the manuscript. The articles, with the title page containing the authors' names and affiliations removed, are then sent to the SCOLT Editorial Board, and each article is reviewed by at least two of these specialists. Normally, articles are sent to reviewers who have expertise in the area treated by the article. The reviewers are asked to make one of three recommendations: (1) publish as is, (2) publish after rewriting, or (3) do not publish.

Once these recommendations are received by the Editors, the final decision whether or not to publish the article is made. As a result of these procedures, at least three individuals decide whether or not to include the oral presentation in the Annual Meeting, and then three different people read and approve the presenter's article before it is selected to appear in *Dimension*.

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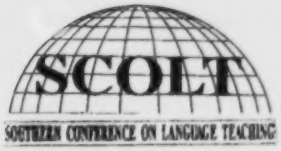

INTRODUCTION

The publication in 1996 of *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* was the result of an unprecedented collaborative effort of 11 professional organizations. These standards are organized around five goals: 1) **Communication**, 2) **Cultures**, 3) **Connections**, 4) **Comparisons**, and 5) **Communities**. Since the publication of the Standards, numerous states and communities have begun the task of reconciling their local curricula to the collective goals. The Standards project has been recognized by numerous professional organizations, including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (Phillips, 1999). However, the Standards represent not only an accomplishment but a challenge. Specifically, they challenge teachers to move beyond the familiar confines of the textbook. It is worth noting that there are no standards for finishing exercise B and covering up through page 327. Each one of the Standards begins with the word **students**, and this phrasing emphasizes the subordination of teacher activity to student learning. Teachers are, however, ultimately responsible for the planning, sequencing, and evaluation of classroom activities and, as such, need to understand the broad goals toward which they are striving. As Phillips (1999) points out, in order to fully implement the standards "Teachers must be willing to dedicate themselves to intensive work with the theoretical principles that form the basis for standards-driven learning" (p. 3).

In an attempt to facilitate this intensive analysis of one of the standards, the Southern Conference of Language Teaching (SCOLT) and the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA) chose as the theme of their joint 1999 conference "Connections Beyond the Foreign Language Classroom." Indeed, "Connections" is a recurring theme in educational research. Cognitive psychology emphasizes the importance of connecting between what is known to the learner and what is unknown. The idea of connections between discipline areas is consistent with the research and practice of educators from all curricular areas. At hundreds of middle schools around the country, for example, interdisciplinary team planning provides a viable model for the Connections standard. Within a foreign language context, the Connections standard envisions a Spanish class assignment to

gather information about the 1989 invasion of Panama and the subsequent trial of Manuel Noriega. Such a lesson would clearly demonstrate the relationship between the Spanish language, history, political science, and geography.

Another aspect of the Connections standard encourages students to pursue personal interests above and beyond regular classroom assignments. Thus, a student with a passion for soccer would be encouraged by her French teacher to research France's victory in the 1998 World Cup through the use of written and electronic media as well as conversations with native speakers. By allowing students to make these real-life connections with areas of personal and professional interest, the Connections standard addresses the issue of relevancy of foreign language study.

Held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on March 11-13, the 1999 SCOLT/FLAVA conference featured over 80 sessions and half-day workshops conducted by foreign language professionals from within and beyond the 13-state SCOLT region. The eight articles selected for inclusion in *Dimension 1999* are drawn from these presentations and examine the historical background and the theories of the Connections standard as well as provide examples of this standard in action.

In the opening article Hélène Gresso and Lara Lomicka provide an historical context for the goals outlined in the Connections standard by presenting the work of the French educator Celestin Freinet. Over 70 years ago Freinet encouraged teachers and students to establish connections beyond the classrooms through intercultural learning networks and interaction with the community. Although Freinet's educational philosophy is not widely known in the United States, Gresso and Lomicka remind us that exchanges between classes and the use of guest speakers is neither unique to foreign language classes nor is an exclusively modern technique.

John Chaston, in his article on using oral histories in the language learning process, applies Freinet's philosophy to a modern classroom and discusses the benefits of connecting with local immigrant populations through the use of interviews. Chaston provides numerous examples of how these taped and transcribed interviews become the point of departure for grammatical and cultural lessons as well as links with other disciplines such as political science, history, and geography.

Focusing on the relationship between foreign languages and other disciplines, Judith Rusciolelli discusses the special challenges posed by business language courses. Rusciolelli contends that, although our knowledge of the principles of second language acquisition has expanded greatly in recent years, the application of these principles to courses in which both language and content are unfamiliar to students can create problems for

even the most experienced instructor. Her article offers numerous classroom activities that have proven to be successful in a Spanish for Business course.

Hispanic migrant workers represent a rapidly growing population in many areas of the SCOLT region, and Susan Wehling considers ways to use the foreign language class as a springboard to understand and assist this often neglected community. Drawing on the precepts of service-learning, Wehling describes the involvement of several Spanish classes with a local migrant community. In addition to helping needy migrant families, students benefitted from increased cultural awareness and improved linguistic skills.

Surely the most direct way for "students to acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints" of other cultures is through overseas travel. However, in order to maximize the benefits of such travel, teachers must prepare students for the inevitable cross-cultural conflicts they will encounter overseas. Lola Hidalgo Calle and David Alley propose a training model which includes an analysis of American culture, a discussion of stereotypes and ethnocentricism, and a series of cross-cultural role plays.

Extending access to foreign language classes to those students who are limited by time or distance is the theme of Carolyn Lally's article. Lally describes her experience with a web-based independent study course in French civilization. For those teachers interested in expanding the teaching of foreign languages beyond the four walls of the classroom, Lally suggests first pilot-testing a web-based format before undertaking a more costly distance learning course.

Connections between teachers is the theme of the article by Clara Krug and Anne Fountain, which considers the past, present, and future of the Academic Alliances. Begun in 1981 by Claire Gaudiani, these local collaborative groups have provided opportunities for foreign language teachers in grades K-college to discuss issues of local, state, and national importance. These groups have particular relevance since over half of the 60 functioning Academic Alliances fall within the 13-state SCOLT region.

In the concluding article, Linda Wallinger departs from the Connections theme but addresses the crucial question of how to accommodate foreign language classes to the block schedule. Despite a rapid increase in the number of high schools adopting block scheduling, foreign language teachers have been among its most vocal opponents. Wallinger summarizes recent research on foreign languages and the block and reports on her own study which measured student performance in listening, reading, speaking, and writing on three different schedules.

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The authors of the eight articles in *Dimension 99* offer numerous ideas of how to forge connections with the unique viewpoints of the target language cultures as well as other disciplines. In summary the articles offer strong evidence of the foreign language teaching profession's commitment to adapting current teaching practices to these unifying Standards.

David Alley
Co-Editor

Reference

Phillips, J. K. (1999). Standards for world languages - On a firm foundation. In J.K. Phillips & R.M. Terry (Eds.), *Foreign language standards: Linking research, theories and practices* (pp. 1-14). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Publisher's note:

The book, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning:Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996), which provided the theme for the 1999 SCOLT/ FLAVA Joint Conference, has been revised (by the addition of additional pages of language-specific interpretation of the Standards for Chinese, Classical languages, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) and republished by Allen Press, Lawrence, KS, as *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999).

1
Intercultural Communities: Rethinking Célestin Freinet

Hélène Gresso and Lara Lomicka
The Pennsylvania State University

Introduction

The national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* aim to pave the way for the 21st century by emphasizing five goal areas: comparisons, communication, culture, connections, and communities. At the beginning of the 20th century, Célestin Freinet, a public school teacher in the small French town of Bar sur Loup, embarked on a project that promoted many of these goal areas. His project, "global learning networks" (Cummins & Sayers, 1995, p. 119), provided a way for students to communicate interculturally and encouraged both meaningful and reflective learning. Rethinking Freinet's contributions to Western education in terms of the five Standards provides us with a wealth of possibilities for foreign language learning.

Although Freinet is considered one of Europe's finest educational innovators and reformers, his work did not reach the United States until the mid 1990s. Most of his recognition in the United States is due to this learning network project. However, this project is only part of a broader pedagogical system which focuses on collaborative and critical inquiry, student autonomy, and community engagement, both in and out of the classroom.

Rethinking Célestin Freinet

In order to understand the basis of Freinet's philosophical framework, one first needs a brief introduction to the French educational system and the place of his pedagogy within that system. The highly centralized French educational system emphasizes abstract thinking and focuses on the classical canon. Its nationalized curriculum affords little consideration of student interests or of topics relating to everyday life (Lee, 1983). As early as 1921, Freinet realized the extent to which this system tended to alienate his students; thus he decided to link his students' interests with the world outside the school and to reach out to other cultures. He maintained that students needed to be actively involved in the community, both in and out of the

classroom. Through conference presentations and publications, Freinet soon became well known in his field. He presented his ideas from both a philosophical and practical standpoint, as he sought to link philosophy, theory, and practice. His publications pushed teachers to develop collaborative and innovative ways for learning, renouncing the traditional teacher-centered system that was in place in the French school system. His ultimate goal was to create a coherent teaching system that would be of benefit to the educational field at large. In addition to transforming the teacher-centered classroom into a community of learners, Freinet also sought to establish an equitable and supportive society in the classroom. This goal differed significantly from the original authoritative model that he had been instructed to observe and replicate. Furthermore, he set out to reform the content of the curriculum, moving away from nationally imposed topics toward topics which students could relate to their lives. The impact of Freinet's ideas on young European teachers was tremendous.

Freinet encouraged students to be active learners. His pedagogical system focuses on responsibility, equality, cooperation, and autonomy in students, and underscores the importance of linking the student, the school, and the community. In working with others in the class, students become empowered as critical thinkers and develop strong interpersonal skills through independent and collaborative inquiry. One of Freinet's goals was to encourage students to become responsible citizens, whom he defined as individuals who are able to perceive and analyze the world with rigor and creativity; these young people become engaged in their learning, in their community, and in society. Because of Freinet's extensive involvement with educational groups, his ideas quickly spread throughout the educational community. The teachers who were inspired by Freinet's books and articles soon implemented Freinet-type classrooms, established a professional journal, and created educational tools based on their classroom research. They joined together to form a teachers' association, which they called the "Freinet Network." National supervisors, however, were not receptive to Freinet's ideas, as they found that his ideas disrupted their nationalized daily lesson plans. Freinet, speaking both of teachers in the Freinet Network and their students, said, "We have encouraged our students to be suspicious of all [discourses] at first, to test and verify, to establish for themselves their own judgement.... We are not preparing adults who will accept any content, orthodox or not, but citizens, who tomorrow will know how to face life with competence and heroism" (cited in Sivell, 1990, p. 21).[1] Freinet's involvement with the Resistance Movement during the Nazi Occupation furthered both his ideas and the Freinet Network.

Finally, in 1989, some of his ideas were incorporated into France's national curriculum; and, as a result, public Freinet-type classrooms can be found in most French school districts.

While William Lee and his Canadian colleagues John Sivell and David Clandfield have made laudable attempts to introduce the work and philosophy of Célestin Freinet to North America, there has been virtually no implementation of Freinet-type classrooms in the United States. Yet students have much to gain from Freinet's teaching philosophy and from the Network he founded with his colleague, René Daniel.[2] For this reason, at the Pennsylvania State University we have implemented a pilot class based on Freinet's pedagogical system.

Freinet's ideas have become of interest to language researchers and instructors worldwide. Sivell chose to present Freinet's ideas to North America because they merit, "careful attention" from language instructors (1990, p. xxix). For instance, Sivell suggests that Freinet's pedagogical system is closely linked to the Communicative Approach to language instruction. This approach, widely employed in the United States, focuses on communication of meaning through interaction, rather than communication to practice linguistic structures (Brown, 1994; Richards and Rodgers, 1986). However, Freinet's approach to learning differs from the Communicative Approach in that it (a) goes beyond the use of communication and interaction to learn languages (or the subject matter) by seeking to cultivate inquiry, develop social relationships and foster critical thinking in students as they grow as learners; and (b) does not promote communication as a goal in itself, but rather uses communication within the context of correspondence (written and oral communication) with other classes around the world.

Communities in and Beyond the Language Classroom

Intercultural Learning Networks

Freinet-type classes have practiced class-to-class correspondence since the 1920s. This correspondence project is a fundamental part of global learning networks and seeks to link classroom practice with reflective teaching. Freinet began this project in 1924 by means of a printing press and the postal service, the only available tools at the time. He encouraged students to write about topics of their choice, then polish and print their texts. Once several texts were collected, they were printed and bound in a small volume; and the magazine was sent to the class correspondents along with small items related to their region, such as films of themselves, cultural

packages, and personal letters. Freinet's first correspondents resided in Brittany, a region that differed culturally and linguistically from the region of the Alps of Upper Provence.

Contemporary classrooms from the Freinet Network have adopted the latest technologies available to them. However, as one teacher points out, "We use tools of communication because we communicate. We do not communicate because we have tools of communication" (Beaumont, 1992, pp. 1-2). While the printing press has been replaced today by Fax and Internet technologies, correspondence remains at the foundation of learning for Freinet-type classes. Therefore, global learning networks are well organized in France and in other countries where the Freinet Network is developed. We will suggest several ways in which correspondence can be used to promote intercultural communities: student-to-student exchanges, class-to-class correspondence, the exchange of cultural packages, and cooperative magazine/journal projects. All of these types of correspondence seek to establish communities between different cultures and promote a dynamic awareness of other people and diverse perspectives.

Student-to-Student Letters

Exchange of student letters takes place between individuals who become correspondents or *keypals* and communicate via regular mail or e-mail.[3] Students write a minimum number of lines to their correspondent in the target language (depending on the level, from 4 to 15 lines); and once that minimum is reached, they may write in their native language. They are free to choose the content of their letter, but are specifically encouraged to respond to questions posed by their keypals. Usually, students enjoy discussing their daily lives, a topic accessible even to beginners. Interacting with young people from a different part of the world motivates students to consider different perspectives, offers them a personal link to the culture, and provides an active and meaningful approach to language learning.

Class-to-Class Letters

Letters can also be written from one class to another and may address a particular theme or present general information about the class. An intermediate French class studying World War II surveyed its keypals about this period, and were excited to receive personal stories from their grandparents. Collecting information about a specific theme is especially interesting when students conduct surveys, design charts, and observe patterns. For instance, information can be gathered about homes, favorite brand

names, or stereotypes. Usually, both classes participate in the same survey or prepare answers to the questions before responding to their keypals. Classes work as a group to develop a specific question or topic and often publish it on their class web page. Both classes communicate via the Internet and discuss their reactions. Class-to-class correspondence encourages a student-centered, cooperative way to foster comparisons between two cultures.

Cultural Package Exchanges

Freinet's students had never left the south of France and were curious about Brittany, the region where their correspondents lived. His students wanted to find out about the *goémon* harvest and early morning chores on the farm.[4] With the cooperation of his colleague René Daniel, the two classes exchanged cultural packages. The students in Brittany were delighted to receive dried figs, oranges, olives, and orange blossoms and sent in return algae from the Atlantic, pictures of the fishing boats, and shells from the seashore to the Provençal students (Barré, 1996). This first experience led to continued cultural exchanges between students discovering another culture. Today learners and their correspondents can send and receive similar cultural packages. The objects need not be expensive—advertisements cut out of magazines, candy, pizza menus, brochures from the region, or a school handbook. After receiving a box of cultural artifacts from their correspondents, the American students from a beginning French class at Penn State decided to make their own cultural package to send in return. They began with a collage of realia from their daily lives, such as football tickets, newspaper headlines, calendars, and menus, and then wrote short descriptions in the target language about what they chose to include in their collage. In addition, they decided to send small items such as beanie babies, candy corn, and magazines. Over the course of the year, students also exchanged music and other items related to particular themes in the course program.

Collaborative Journal/Magazine

Freinet-type classes encourage students to write a wealth of compositions, or *textes libres*, and typically provide an outlet for publication.[5] In the 1920s Freinet's students began by using the printing press to publish small magazines displaying student work. More recently, some Freinet-type classes have chosen to publish work on a web site. Our French class magazine, titled *Raison d'être*, is published every other month on our web site.[6] Students in the U.S. and in France collaborate in their endeavors to

make the magazine as complete and interesting as possible. The magazine has different sections based on the different writings produced by both classes: (a) *news briefs*: the classroom news, and francophone world news as presented by the students; (b) *reflection pieces*: a short collection of comments by students from either class with questions to make the reader think; (c) *dossier*: or central feature; (d) *creations*: creative writings; and (e) *mail from readers*: where comments from readers are presented. The students enjoy collaborating on the magazine and feel a sense of accomplishment by presenting their work to friends and family.

Corresponding with other classes makes the learning process come alive to students; they reported that they learned about linguistic structures in the target country that they had not found in their textbooks. The correspondence project also delineated different cultural patterns, such as the importance and awareness of politics in French daily life and discussions. Intercultural networks allowed students to confront and discuss stereotypes, as they explored who they are, how they are perceived by others, and how they perceive others. Students learned how culture influences perspectives and behaviors. One student said, "I felt the e-mail experience with our keypals was successful in that it gave us a look at French culture through the eyes of kids our same age and how similar our views are and are not." The availability of a "resource person" other than the teacher allowed students to reflect and question facts discussed in class and in the textbook. In addition, students reported learning more about the target country's civilization. One student observed, "I learned a lot about the French lifestyle, culture, and traditions. I got to see what French students study and what they spend their time doing. I learned about French music, literature, regions, culture, celebrities, language, etc. I hope I was able to teach my keypal as much as she taught me." Another student added, "I liked hearing my keypal's views on political positions the best, for it gave me a better understanding of how important politics are in France. I learned more about the inner workings of the French culture through my keypal and how French society differs from ours in the process of finding a vocation and deciding what to do with your life." Furthermore, intercultural communities help to make the abstract more concrete and the general more personal: "It [culture] was no longer something that we read about in books, but it was alive, and people were actually experiencing what we were discussing." Students are able to see the ideas they discuss embodied in individuals; and they can relate to their keypals through these ideas and through the language, linking themselves in their society to their keypals and the society of the target country.

Community Interaction

At times language learning is equated with what takes place during class time between teachers and their students. Freinet cautioned against this simplistic approach, emphasizing the importance of involving the outside world in the learning process: "The school system should no longer be conceived as a public space closed in itself, but . . . as an intimate, personal space and a meeting ground, open to the outside. 'Opening to the outside' does not mean continuous interruption by people from the outside, but knowing that students have the right and the opportunity to make contacts with their community" (Barré, 1996, p. 65). It is beneficial for students to interact with the community to expand their learning of both language and culture. This interaction can take place in and out of class, individually or collaboratively, and by students' deliberate exploration of the resources available in the community. One way for students to interact in their communities is by inviting guest speakers into the classroom. Students can take the initiative to make contacts with people who could potentially come to class and share their perspective on the target country or on issues related to the target country. Teachers should investigate possible resources for guest speakers, provide students with a list of contacts, and then allow them to explore.

There are numerous benefits of inviting guest speakers to the class. Each guest speaker presents different opinions. Their opinions may differ significantly from one another, and also from opinions offered by the teacher or the textbook. Therefore, students are able to use their critical skills to sort through the information to which they are exposed. In hearing different perspectives on issues, students begin to break down stereotypes and realize that not *all* French people think alike; rather, they pause and reflect on different options. Eventually they are able to perceive and appreciate a diversity of thoughts based on individual and regional characteristics, educational background, or ethnic origin. Their vision of the target country and its people is no longer immobile and static; it remains dynamic and in a state of constant change.

Opening the classroom to guest speakers can offer opportunities for students to improve listening comprehension. Students are exposed to different voices and accents, and they begin perceiving differences among these. One student reported hearing a male speak French for the first time during a guest speaker presentation: "Men and women have different inflections in their voice. It always felt strange to me that I've never had a male professor. I've always wondered how that really affects my accent."

In addition, guest speakers provide a first-hand testimony of certain events. For instance, in the intermediate French class studying World War II, a veteran came to talk about D-Day. He presented a first-hand account of landing in Normandy, crossing France, and encountering a culture torn by war. A beginning-level French class invited two different guest speakers, both natives of the target country, to speak on their personal experiences during the student strikes in 1968 and 1986. Students prepared questions based on their readings, heard first-hand accounts in authentic, simple French, and saw magazines and posters which the speakers had brought with them and which dated back to 1968. After the presentations, students worked on a collaborative writing project, demonstrating what they had understood from the presentations, then followed up by writing short opinion pieces, linking guest speakers' accounts to what they had read and discussed.

Guest speakers can be local merchants, native speakers, other teachers, business people who have traveled abroad, international students, or students who have studied in another country. Students may want to begin their quest for finding guest speakers at the school itself, drawing from the history or social science departments, art, music, or science. Speakers could discuss any topic related to class: German romantic musicians, Russian and American cooperation in space, the revolutionary wars in France and the American colonies, or the role of soccer in Latin America. Also, searches can be conducted at the local ethnic clubs or foundations; the local VFW; language associations, such as the Goethe Institut or the Alliance Française; or local ethnic food places, such as a Mexican restaurant or a pastry shop. The public library may also be a good resource, as librarians are often knowledgeable about diverse topics. Finally, travel agents, airline personnel, or local business people can come to discuss their jobs and their involvement with the target language and culture.

Guest speakers often have practical information to share with the class based on trips, study, or work in other countries. In addition to learning from professionals, students can learn from other students, such as foreign business majors or MBA students who have drawn comparisons about business in the target country and in the U.S. It is also beneficial to share perspectives about education, job expectations, and values. Meeting with a young American who spent time abroad as an *au pair* or with students who studied overseas can provide for interesting discussions. Students become encouraged to think about studying abroad themselves and are able to reflect on accounts of culture shock and personal experiences with the culture. Presentations by guest speakers link the community and the classroom.

Students realize the relevance of the language in their life and are provided with a first-hand, diverse account of various topics and issues.

Global Awareness

Encouraging students to become more globally aware of issues outside of the United States is advantageous because it aims to cultivate a need for inquiry, make students aware of the target country's presence in the news, and promote higher order skills. Students quickly become engaged to explore issues going on in or concerning the target countries. These issues could be linked directly to their academic interests or simply be a way for them to share something they think would be of interest to the class. There are several ways to encourage students to become more globally aware of happenings in the target country. We will discuss one technique to promote global awareness: the implementation of an *announcement time* or *forum*.

While maintaining an active approach to learning, Célestin Freinet successfully put into practice a technique that he coined *Quoi de Neuf?* (What's new?). Freinet began each class day with a 5-to-10-minute forum in which students were given the opportunity to exchange information. Students were responsible for choosing the information that they would share with classmates. While content of the information might differ, depending on the age of the students, the announcement forum served to bring the class together and to encourage students to reflect on issues outside of their native country. Freinet sought to link together (a) students' desires to talk about themselves and their interests, (b) their curiosity as to what was happening outside their lives (in the rest of the community and in their classmates' lives), and (c) classroom work.

The announcement time engages learners to participate in short discussions; and, as a result, topics can be frequently incorporated into the class material. It is also easy to adapt to any foreign language classroom or level. Based on our experiences in a beginning language class, we would suggest the following ideas for implementation: Instructors can open class with an announcement time, which serves as a forum for students to exchange ideas and discuss topics of interest related to the target country. A daily announcement time not only serves as an entertaining warm-up activity, but it also allows for the exchange of cultural information between the teacher and students and helps to promote a sense of community in the classroom. News can be of a personal or international nature and can include information about films and plays showing in the area, restaurants, speakers, or anything related to the class itself. To prepare announcements,

students can obtain up-to-date information from the World Wide Web, American news, or international students; they are also free to discuss their own experiences in the target country. Depending on the type of announcement, the teacher may choose to begin a discussion, develop and link certain points to a course theme, propose different viewpoints, or encourage further research. Beginning-level teachers might suggest that students start by providing announcements in English, when related to international matters; and in French, when related to personal matters. For upper-level classes or adult students, the announcements may lead to discussions of economic, political, or social issues, such as poverty, student strikes, or pollution.

Because they provide daily announcements, students become careful listeners and readers of the news. Students report the importance of knowing what is going on outside their own culture; they make comparisons to issues in their day-to-day life, become more globally aware of issues outside the U.S., and also learn more about their own country. Cummins and Sayers (1995) refer to the idea of "distancing," whereby students develop an "awareness of social, cultural, historical, geographic, and linguistic realities of [their] own community as a result of the need to describe these realities in response to questions from distant peers" (p. 137). Students begin to feel a tie with the other countries; they no longer see culture as a monolithic mass, but rather as a diverse set of elements in constant movement. They become "life-long learners" and "see a French connection at every turn," as one student summarized. Another student mentioned the benefit of connecting news and language. The announcement time is also a way for students to link content from other courses with the culture of the target country. For example, topics in history, social studies, graphic arts, art history, theater, literature, political science, and cinema may be relevant for the class when they pertain to the target country's civilization. Furthermore, students are usually excited to make links between two classes.

Announcement periods allow students to become more worldly and more critical toward their own announcements. Students spontaneously and often publicly classify what they choose to report as "important news" or "anecdotal news." Their statements reveal that they begin to reflect on the topics which they choose to present to the class. Finally, students learn how to summarize and synthesize news articles. Critical skills develop as students work with information in order to present it to their classmates. Each week, a different student is in charge of noting the content of the announcements and placing that report on the web or in a magazine where the others can consult it. Because students are responsible for their own research, instructors are encouraged to welcome the results of students' curiosity and treat them as valid and worthy of consideration. Students

look forward to what their peers will present, knowing that the choice is based on their own interests. They become more globally aware, and they grow to better understand the country's moving reality.

Conclusion

Intercultural communities aim to promote higher order skills, cooperation, and academic engagement. Freinet's pedagogical system lends itself well to any foreign language class seeking to integrate comparisons, culture, connections, communication, and communities. Although we have primarily focused our discussion on how these ways are related to communities, the five goal areas have been woven into his pedagogical system. By working together and creatively using language, students learn about the language and its ties to culture. In negotiating and refining meanings with peers, students experience a dynamic view of culture. Through intercultural communities, students see the relevance of the language in their lives. Communication in and beyond the classroom encourages students to become engaged in the learning. Intercultural communities move toward meeting the demands of the 21st century language learner by transforming the learning process into both an intellectual and personal adventure.

Notes

1 *Héroïsme* in French conveys the ability to act nobly and make courageous, wise decisions quickly.

2 René Daniel, from Brittany, a northwest region of France, became interested in Freinet's techniques in 1923. The two educators began collaboration on various projects in 1924.

3 *Keypals* are penpals who write to each other with a keyboard, instead of with pens.

4 *Goémon* is a type of algae found in Brittany and harvested for people and animals.

5 *Textes libres* are compositions written on topics chosen by students. Students write these compositions for themselves, for their peers, and for others in the community.

6 The class web site is maintained by the *Editeur en chef du Web*, a student in the class who volunteers for this position. The URL for the site is < http://beetle.la.psu.edu/fr111 >.

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2

Beyond the Foreign Language: Making Connections Through Recorded Oral Histories

John M. Chaston
University of New Hampshire

Introduction

In *Standards For Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century,* teachers of foreign languages are reminded of their opportunity and responsibility to provide topics of interest that will challenge students, constantly pushing them to their limits. Ideally, these topics will enable students to develop their emerging new language skills and at the same time provide them with new understanding and insights into concepts studied in and taken from the wider school curriculum. The new information presented in one class, be it social studies, science, mathematics, etc., ideally ought to be a point of departure for continued learning in the foreign language classroom. In order for this to occur, it is incumbent upon the teacher to reach beyond the comfortable confines of the classroom text and orchestrate these connections by accessing varied new sources through technology, personal interviews, newspapers, magazines, books, dictionaries, and encyclopedias (*Standards,* 1996, 27-34, 49-52).

This paper focuses on the establishment of these connections through use of one of these important media: the personal interview. It begins with a methodology of how teachers in search of obtaining original and pertinent recorded personal oral histories for classroom use can identify interviewees and conduct interviews in ways to enhance the quality and variety of the information gathered. Following this, an excerpted selection is accompanied by explanations which describe how this true life experience, which connects to interests and disciplines across the curriculum, can be used as a basis for instruction in communication, culture, and grammar. While oral histories can be adapted and developed for all levels of second language learning, this presentation is limited to strategies for instruction at the intermediate level.

Interview Methodology

While most teachers may have invited an occasional visitor to their classes to talk on a special topic or taped a significant single incident from a friend, many teachers may be either unaware of the vast instructional possibilities available from personal interviews or they are unsure as how to carry out and record these interviews. For optimum success, those teacher-researchers (referred to as researchers throughout the remainder of this paper) who are serious about actively gathering large quantities of new information through the interview process should consider the three principal stages of the interview process: (1) identifying and selecting interviewees, (2) setting up the interview, and (3) performing the interview. The researcher should always remember that the interview experience is an individual process which is in a constant state of development and that no format can be the one and only way to interview; it is largely a matter of researchers' using their own personalities and strengths as conversationalists, retaining what does work and discarding what does not.

Identification and Selection of Interviewees

In order to access the greatest number and variety of potential interviewees, the researcher must devise a personal system of networking within the community through four principal means. First, identify persons with whom the researcher shares significant commonality: friends, neighbors, associates, students. Second, when appropriate, ask each of those persons identified in the previous step to refer at least one acquaintance, friend, or family member as a prospective interviewee. Experience shows that those who go through the interview process enjoy it and are happy to offer more than a single name. Third, apart from this referral method, begin making new contacts apart from existing connections. These new contacts can be made with relative ease, although not without directed effort, through normal daily interaction. Immediate contacts can often be found in clothing shops, playgrounds, city recreation leagues, clubs, foreign student associations, and a variety of community organizations, especially those designed to meet the needs of a particular nationality, race, or ethnic group. Additional sources include bookstores, video shops, record stores (these are especially effective if they are language specific businesses). These lists are not exhaustive and can be expanded to include any place that foreign language speakers work, play, and live. Fourth, enlist as co-interviewers members of the community with the necessary foreign language skills, including some of the previous interviewees. During the course of the interviews these co-interviewers can reveal new episodes and in-

sights. Additionally, these co-interviewers will nearly always involve family members and/or friends at some time. This networking system will continue to grow and provide the researcher access to members of the desired language group.

Setting Up the Interview

Because the interviewees are legally considered human subjects in research projects such as these, and hence, legal implications can result, at some institutions it may be mandatory for the researcher to discuss and clear such projects with an institutional or state review board before initiating the interviews. Included in this process is an informed consent form designed to be signed by the interviewees as a legal acknowledgment of their own participation and rights with respect to the project. Researchers should not allow this to deter their involvement in gathering interviews, since for the purposes of this type of project, such permission is protective and deemed by most as a simple formality.

The actual process of setting up the interview may vary, but the purpose of a call or a visit to a prospective interviewee is to: (1) explain the purpose of the project and the intended uses of the information recorded in the interview, (2) describe the general interview process, (3) inform the interviewee of his or her legal options, both during and after the interview, (4) commit the interviewee to grant an interview, and (5) determine a time and place for the interview. Whatever else is discussed is dictated by the situation and relationship of the researcher and the prospective interviewee. In fixing a time and a place for the interview, it is essential to provide an appropriate setting that allows the interviewee the greatest chance to feel comfortable and speak naturally and freely. The interview can take place in the researcher's home, the interviewee's home, a community center, a business location, a school, or any other location that will be comfortable and convenient for the interviewee at a time when distractions and noise can be kept to a minimum.

Performing the Interview

In addition to a good story that will connect language students to other topic areas, the researcher is in search of natural language full of grammatical, lexical, and cultural elements. In order to elicit these elements, the interviewer ought to make every effort to invoke the norms of "social conversation" rather than those of the "formal interview," since speech employed in a situation defined as an "interview" is formal, stilted and quite distant from the vernacular (Silva–Corvalán, 1989). The first step

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toward invoking these norms of social conversation is to create an environment conducive to making a real conversation. This can be accomplished by carrying out the interviews with at least two, and maybe three interviewers who, while allowing the interviewee to dominate the conversation, will offer comments, anecdotes, opinions, and personal experiences of their own. Rather than being intimidating for the interviewee, this technique generally provides for a friendly and stimulating exchange of ideas and experiences.

As the interview is about to begin, no attempt to hide the recorder is necessary. It should be placed in the middle of all the interview participants, and it will soon be forgotten. The use of a stereo boundary microphone is recommended so as to avoid picking up the recorder's motor noise (the resulting clarity of the recording is necessary for classroom use and is helpful during the transcription process).

While the questions and topics presented below are presented in English, the interview itself is to be done in the target language and can begin with sentence completion exercises related to common topics. This sentence completion activity, which is borrowed and adapted from Smead (1988), who used this process to elicit specific language samples of mood selection of Spanish speakers in the Southwest, is especially helpful to the inexperienced interviewer and can serve as an icebreaker for the conversation/interview. For example, for an interviewee from Mexico, the interviewer invites him or her to complete sentences such as:

- The best thing about Mexico is ...
- The worst thing about Mexico is ...
- The best thing about the United States is ...
- The worst thing about the United States is ...
- The saddest thing about leaving Mexico was ...
- When I first came to the United States, what initially most impressed me was ...
- My favorite memory from Mexico is ...
- What I most wish people understood about me is ...
- What I most wish I could change is ...
- It is important to me that...
- My greatest desire or wish is ...

Examples such as these can give both the interviewers and the interviewee time to become familiar with one another and may serve as a springboard for conversation topics. After completing these sentence completion activities, the interviewers attempt to elicit a natural dialogue

on various topics taken from a series of modules, consisting of, but not limited to: (1) family and everyday life in the homeland: customs or traditions, foods, holiday activities, vacations, special friends, a normal daily schedule at home, school, or work; (2) historical accounts and events: eyewitness account of events or conflicts (national, international), wars, political events, natural disasters, any type of unexpected events that affect the community, country, or the world; (3) folk culture and medicine: specific illness and its cure, use of herbs, legends, stories; (4) opinions: youth, music, customs, attitudes, regional, national, international news; noted differences between life in the homeland and the United States, dreams and aspirations, changes one would make in the world or community (why and how); advice or final thoughts; (5) personal experiences: unexpected news, embarrassing situations, etc.; (6) coming to the United States: Why?, How?, Initial reactions?, Initial difficulties, language, unique family histories and accounts, special childhood memories, momentous decisions (Adapted from Labov, 1972).

Expected Results

Using the method in "Identification and Selection of Interviewees," over 50 interviews were successfully obtained in New Hampshire, a region with a relatively small Hispanic population. The interviewees represent a wide sample of environments, including various regions of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Uruguay. Topics discussed included:

- An exiled Cuban relating how he was banished from Cuba for rebellion against Castro's government and rescued from the U.S. Coast Guard while he and companions were drifting on a raft at sea
- A Puerto Rican fable of how the owl got his feathers and why he only comes out at night
- An assassination plot against an official in Juan Perón's government in Argentina and his successful escape into Uruguay, as told by the would-be-assassain's daughter
- An up-close account of the earthquake in Mexico City in 1985 in which over 100,000 people died
- A discussion by a Bolivian cartographer on the good and bad effects of computers in the work place and in our lives
- A discussion on the economics of why Colombian farmers are so willing to grow the coca plant for cocaine production
- Various accounts of forced exile or illegal entry into the U.S.

- An explanation of the training of soccer players to maximize performance for international competition

This partial listing suggests the vastness of the potential information that may be available within one's own community.

Implementing the Interviews in Course Instruction

After recording and transcribing the interviews, the teacher-researcher must determine what he or she has and decide what to do with it. In classroom instruction, teachers are accustomed to teaching vocabulary, grammar, and culture according to a predetermined course outline or syllabus which follows a published text or texts. Often these are isolated and presented in reading and listening selections, many of which are contrived and specially composed for instructional purposes. Hendrickson (1991, p.197) recommends that: "Teaching language in authentic contexts in the classroom should approximate as closely as possible language as it is used by native speakers outside of the classroom." What better way to assure an authentic context for learning than to use actual interview transcriptions when appropriate for written or analytical examination, or actual recorded voice for listening practice and pronunciation models?

Clearly, some portions of the interviews will be simple, others complex. Some can be used to teach, practice, or test one specific grammar concept; some can be used for listening practice, models of pronunciation, or phonetic study and evaluation; and others may make connections with cultural insights into history, geography, gastronomy, sociology, literature, political science, history, psychology, economics, sports, and more. In order for the selections to be effectively applied to classroom instruction, the task needs to be appropriate. The College Board's publication *Articulation & Achievement* (1996) outlines five stages along a language learning continuum which may assist teachers in making appropriate determinations as to which materials and activities can be most effective in their classes. Since the examples provided in the present work specifically focus on the intermediate Stage III level of proficiency, comments herein are limited to this learning level.

As explained in *Articulation & Achievement*, Stage III is a pivotal and crucial time for students as their emphasis shifts from the regurgitation of prepared material toward spontaneous creation of language and dissemination of original ideas at a basic level. Among other things, these students are expected to be able to speak in comprehensible related sentences, understand spoken language when deliberately conveyed by speakers accustomed to interacting with language learners, write simple but origi-

nal paragraphs, and read well enough to understand new information from authentic texts. As Stage III learners, they also are expected to develop the ability to narrate in the present, past, and future; communicate and understand emotions; express and understand opinions as they deal with such topics as history, art, literature, music, current affairs, civilization, political and social issues, career choices, and the people and events related to these issues. While many students have covered and mastered isolated concepts and vocabulary, and have been successful at Stages I and II, many cannot organize the elements of language that they have studied to adequately function at a new level of language creation. It is at this point that students begin to be unpredictable in their use of language as they struggle to share their thoughts and feelings. As they attempt to stretch their limits, their grammatical, lexical, and phonetic accuracy tends to decrease. The College Board further states that it is at this stage that language learning becomes increasingly frustrating for many learners and the relationship of classroom study to genuine language acquisition becomes problematic. A common solution for students is to simply drop out, to discontinue their language study. A better solution would be to allocate more time for students to master these Stage III skills and use materials that will aid in this process. [All thoughts and some phrases taken from *Articulation & Achievement* (1996, 19-21, 26)]

The proper use of oral histories, however brief or long an excerpt might be, provides students with examples of real language. Such examples can be related to other topics of study, other personal areas of interest, and can allow students the opportunity to practice with samples that mix tenses, that include idiomatic phrases, that allow for brief informational asides, and that show the development of conversational patterns.

The Oral History Sample

The following sample, excerpted and edited from an unpublished transcript of a conversation with Analía Maltáis (1994), has been selected as an example that is appropriate for use in multiple levels of instruction and challenges students to make connections across the curriculum. The suggested classroom activities only scratch the surface of possibilities. The reader should adapt and expand upon these ideas.

El Perú es un país muy histórico y además tiene lugares que son muy rústicos y exóticos. Por ejemplo, Cusco es una ciudad muy bonita, que ha sido construida en las bases de las construcciones indígenas de los incas. O sea, la mitad de las casas tienen como base la misma construcción de piedra que los incas tuvieron, es decir, los españoles construyeron encima de esos cimientos. Es una hermosa

combinación de lo incaico con lo español. También hay muchas iglesias en Cusco porque los españoles eran muy católicos, muy religiosos y edificaron muchas iglesias barrocas que son tan bellas.

El interior del Perú también es precioso. Cuando yo terminé la universidad había un nuevo programa que el gobierno organizó para entusiasmar a la gente joven a que fuéramos a los lugares internos y a las provincias pequeñas para traer el progreso y ayudar al Perú. Yo fui y trabajé de maestra por cuatro años en el interior, en Huallaga, en la zona de Marañón. Realmente no puedes imaginar lo bello que es el interior. Tienes que verlo para creerlo, pero es peligroso también. Y por eso mi familia estaba nerviosa.

Es peligroso en el sentido de que en las épocas de verano vienen grandes diluvios. Por ejemplo, durante toda la época de mi primer año en Huallaga estaba todo muy seco. De repente en el verano, vinieron las lluvias y había cascadas por todos lados. Recuerdo que el río creció tanto que cortó la mitad del patio del colegio donde vivía y se lo llevó todo. También pasaban barcas, animales, personas, todo. El río arrastra todo.

Hay otras cosas también, por ejemplo, la boa. La destructor. La que te amarra, que primero te rompe tus huesos y después te absorbe. Una vez yo estaba caminando, porque a mí me encantaba caminar, y la vi pasar. Era inmensa, gruesa y muy lenta. No sabía si la cabeza estaba a este lado o acá. Y allí me paré de pie: tranquila, inmovilizada, esperando. Felizmente por fin pasó, pero era inmensa. Pero, como dije, la selva es también hermosa. Hay toda clase de mariposas, rosales, y por la noche era tan bonito por las luciernas.

(Peru is a very historic country, and it has many rustic and exotic places. For example, Cusco is a beautiful city that has been constructed on the foundations of the indigenous buildings of the Incas. Well, at least half of the houses have the same stone foundation that the Incas had, that is, the Spaniards built right on top of those old stone foundations. It is a marvelous combination of Incan and Spanish culture and architecture. There are also many churches in Cuzco because the Spaniards were so devoutly Catholic, and they built so many baroque churches that are so beautiful.

The interior of Peru is wonderful too. After I graduated from the university there was a new program that the government had established to encourage young people to go to the interior and to the small provinces to bring progress to and to help Peru grow. I went and worked as a teacher with this program for four years in the interior, in Huallaga, in the Marañón region. You really can't imagine how beautiful it is there. You have to see it to believe it. But it is dangerous too, which is why my family was nervous [about my going there].

It's dangerous in the sense that in the summer there are great floods. For example, during nearly the whole part of my first year everything was dry as could be. Then suddenly in the summer, the heavy rains came and there was flooding and waterfalls everywhere. I remember that the river got so big it just ripped half of the patio away from the school where I was living and swept it away. It carried

everything away. Boats, animals, people, everything: all floating down the river. The river just drags everything away.

There are other dangers too. For example the boa. The destroyer. The one that grabs you, that first crushes your bones and then swallows you whole. One day I was walking out in the jungle, because I so loved to go for walks and I saw one passing right in front of me. It was huge, and thick, and slow. I didn't know if the head was on this side or the other side. And there I stood: calm, paralyzed, waiting. Happily it passed, but, man, was it big. But, like I said, the jungle is so beautiful. There are all kinds of butterflies, wild roses, and ... And with all the lightning bugs the nights are just so beautiful.)

Grammar Activities and Exercises

While this sample could be used effectively to teach a variety of elements—preterite and imperfect differences, adjectives, direct object pronouns, concordance, article usage, etc., it is especially ideal for use in presenting, practicing, reviewing, or testing the grammatical and usage aspects of the Spanish *ser* and *estar*. These forms, although used very differently in Spanish, are traditionally problematic for students since they can both be translated *to be* in English. A primary use of *ser*, to express characteristics of a given person, place, thing, concept, etc., is repeatedly found throughout the selection, as are primary uses of *estar*, which either indicate location of non-events or describe states or conditions. Additionally, examples of the passive voice, which employs *ser*, and the present progressive, which employs *estar*, provide a relatively complete representation of basic *ser* and *estar* usages. The following include possible activities for classroom instruction and can be adapted to any reading, writing, listening, or speaking activity.

Fill-in Exercises

Provide a worksheet with fill-in-the-blank options of *ser* or *estar* to help students practice and review different tense, mood, person, and number forms of *ser* and *estar* as they also refine their feel for accuracy in the semantic options of these two verbs. The variety of different tenses helps the students to observe and respond to these forms as they appear in real language use, rather than in a contrived string of present tense verbs. Any portion could also be used for examination purposes or classroom discussion.

El Perú _____ un país muy histórico y además tiene lugares que _____ muy rústicos y exóticos. Por ejemplo, Cusco _____ una ciudad muy bonita que ha _____ construida en las bases de las construcciones indígenas de los incas....

Short Sentence Response Exercises

Instruct students to read the text and answer a series of questions which necessitate the use of *ser* or *estar* in the answer whether it is found in the original question or not. The questions and answers should serve as the basis for oral drills during class activities to increase the repetition and hence, retention of the grammatical mastery of *ser* and *estar*. Such questions include:

Characteristics: *ser*

a. ¿Cómo es el Perú? —Es histórico, hermoso, rústico y exótico.
b. ¿Cómo es Cusco? —Es hermoso, una combinación de lo incaico y lo español.
c. ¿Cómo eran los españoles? —Eran católicos y religiosos.
d. ¿Cómo son las iglesias en Cusco? —Son bellas.
e. ¿Cómo es el interior del país? —Es hermoso.
f. ¿Cómo era el río en el verano? —Era grande y fuerte.
g. ¿Cómo era la boa? —Era inmensa, gruesa y lenta.

(a. What is Peru like? —It is historic, beautiful, rustic and exotic.
b. What is Cuzco like? —It is beautiful, a mixture of the Incan and the Spanish.
c. What were the Spaniards like? —They were Catholic and religious.
d. What are the churches like in Cuzco? —They are beautiful.
e. What is the interior of the country like? —It is beautiful.
f. What was the river like in the summer? —It was big and powerful.
g. What was the boa like. —It was huge, thick, and slow.)

Passive Voice: *ser*

h. ¿Encima de qué han sido construidas muchas de las casas en Cusco? —Han sido construidas encima de los cimientos de piedra que construyeron los incas.

h. (On top of what constructions have many of the houses in Cuzcó been built? —They have been built on top of the very same stone foundations that the Incas built.)

State or Condition: *estar*

i. ¿Cómo se sentía la familia de Analía mientras ella trabajaba en Huallaga? —La familia estaba nerviosa.
j. ¿Qué tal Analía cuando se encontraba con la boa? —Estaba tranquila pero paralizada.

(i. How did Analía's family feel about her being in the jungle? —They were nervous.
j. How did Analía react when she happened upon the boa. —She was calm, but paralyzed.)

Location: *estar*

k. ¿Dónde está Cusco? —Está en el Perú.

l. ¿Dónde están las casas que construyeron los españoles? —Están sobre los cimientos de piedras que construyeron los incas.

m. Cuando llegan las lluvias de verano, ¿dónde se encuentran las cascadas? —Están por todos lados.

n. ¿Dónde estaba Analía cuando vio la boa? —Estaba en la selva.

(k. Where is Cuzco? —It is in Peru.

l. Where are the houses that the Spaniards built? —They are on the Incan stone foundations.

m. When the rains come in the summer, where are the waterfalls? —They are on all sides, everywhere.

n. Where was Analía when she saw the boa? —She was in the jungle.)

Present Progressive: *estar*

o. ¿Cuándo vio Analía la boa? —La vio mientras estaba caminando en la selva.

(o. When did Analía see the boa? —She saw it while taking a walk in the jungle.)

Amplification and Personalization of the Topics

Beyond the obvious review of information on Peru, these questions serve as a point of departure for student interaction which requires the creation of original thoughts and sentences. They can be used for compositions, oral presentations, or free conversation. *Ser* and *estar* forms will necessarily appear in all answers.

- Where is your hometown, and what are some its landmarks and historical importance?
- In your hometown, what is the weather like from season to season?
- What are your occupational goals in the future?
- What is a shocking or surprising event that has happened to you?
- Have you ever experienced a flood? What was it like?
- What would you do if a flood washed away part of a patio (or like area) of your school?
- What would you do if you were in the jungle and happened upon a giant snake that was capable of swallowing you whole?

Listening Comprehension Activities and Exercises

In addition to the option in the previous section to allow students to focus on specific grammar uses while discussing or listening to the ex-

cerpt, other listening activities can be developed which specifically emphasize listening comprehension. The following activities are intended to be performed in the language laboratory or at home (using copies of tapes which contain the oral history excerpts), so that students can listen to the tapes as many times as they would like. After completion of a given activity, students can be given a complete version of the excerpt and read along as the tape is played. As they simultaneously hear and see the correct text, speech patterns and details that they may have missed earlier become recognizable.

Fill-in Exercises

Distribute a copy of the text that is left with spaces, such as the one seen below:

Hay _____también, por ejemplo, la boa. _____. La que _____, que primero te rompe _____y después _____. Una vez yo _____, porque a mí me encantaba caminar, y _____. Era _____, gruesa y muy _____...

Either in the classroom or in the language laboratory, the teacher reads the transcription or plays the original tape (a copy) as students fill in the missing words. This gives contextual clues to students as they train themselves to move beyond the simple grasp of main ideas toward the actual comprehension of ideas. This is designed for learners at the lower levels of Stage III.

Question and Answer

Provide a list of questions about any of the content in the excerpt. In addition to the *ser* and *estar* questions previously shown, additional questions can include:

a. ¿Qué hizo Analía cuando terminó la universidad?
b. ¿Qué organizó el gobierno del Perú? ¿Por qué?
c. ¿Qué te puede hacer la boa?

(a. What did Analía do after finishing college?
b. What was organized by the government? Why?
c. What can a boa do to you?)

In the language laboratory or at home, students can find answers to all of the questions. This can serve as the basis for a discussion activity, the difference being that the information is accessed aurally rather than through the printed page.

Formulate Questions

Similar to the previous activity, students are assigned to formulate questions regarding the content of the taped excerpt. Given students' propensity for stumping their classmates and for not being stumped themselves, the coverage of information is very complete. Still, it is very effective to give students a transcript following the activity to reinforce missed words and orthography issues.

Orthographic Transcriptions

Assign students to listen to any portion of the taped excerpt and provide an orthographic transcription of the selection. This is partly diagnostic in order to identify the exact sounds, words, and phrases that are problematic for students. This activity pushes students into Stage IV tasks and competence, and is invaluable in helping students train their ear for detail and nuance.

Cultural Activities and Exercises

Since most of these topics found in the original excerpt can serve, at the discretion and imagination of the teacher, as a springboard into a lesson on some aspect of Peruvian or South American culture, these topics also are likely to facilitate connections with other interests and courses that the students may have. The following is a partial list of facts on Peru that students are introduced to directly, or that are at least alluded to in the excerpt. Whether the original activity was based on reading or listening comprehension, the following represent categories and questions that can be used as guides in preparing brief cultural lessons.

Cultural Connections to History/Art/Architecture/Anthropology

From the excerpt students learn a variety of facts. The Incas inhabited the region known as Peru. Cuzco must have been a major center for the Incas. The Spaniards discovered and settled the area, bringing their own culture and architecture with them. They built homes, buildings, and beautiful baroque churches, many of which were built on the original Incan stone foundations. Additional questions to be answered include:

- What was the time span and expanse of the Incan civilization?
- Was Cuzco the major center of the Incas or just one of many Incan centers?
- When did the Spaniards arrive and then settle the region?

- Who was the leader of the first Spanish conquistadors in the region?
- Was there a peaceful acquisition of the land, or was it a violent conquest?
- Did the conquistadors bring their wives and families, or did they marry the indigenous peoples of the region?
- How did the Spaniards overcome any initial language barriers?
- What is a baroque church?
- What type of stone was used for the original Incan foundations?
- How big were the original foundations?
- Who were the laborers used to build the churches, houses, etc.?
- What type of art (paintings, sculptures, etc.) is found in the churches?

Cultural Connections to Political, Social, and Economic Issues

The excerpt reveals that the Peruvian government set up programs to allow college graduates willing to go to the interior to teach the indiginous peoples of the country. This was to help bring growth to the country. Additional questions to be answered include:

- What type of government does Peru have?
- Why send recent college graduates to the interior to teach the indigenous people, and what are they being taught?
- What type of taxation exists to finance such programs?
- What are the major industries in Peru?
- Who lives in the interior besides the indigenous people?
- What is the population of the indigenous people of Peru, and how are they seen by the rest of the Peruvian citizens?

Cultural Connections to Weather/Topography/ Geography/Flora/Fauna

The students learn from their reading or listening that in Peru there are dry seasons and wet seasons. The wet seasons come in the summer and can bring great destruction with them. Haullaga is a town or city in the Marañón region. The interior (the jungle) is beautiful, but dangerous. There are large snakes, all types of butterflies, wild rosebushes, and fireflies. Possible connections include:

- When is the dry season? How long does it last?
- When is the wet season? How long does it last?
- What is the average yearly rainfall in Peru?

- What percentage actually falls in the wet season?
- Where is Peru in relation to the rest of South America?.
- How big is Cuzco?
- How big is Huallaga?
- Is Marañón a province, a state, a region, or a zone?
- Just how big do boas get?
- What other types of animals and plants are in Peru?
- What are some of the ecological issues facing Peru?
- Is Peru struggling with issues of the shrinking rainforest?

Even if not all of these questions are answered in the Spanish classroom, they serve to establish connections with other discipline areas. When students encounter these same issues in their other classes, it is likely that they will recall Analía's experience and her appreciation of her country.

Conclusions

The collection and organization of oral histories into instructional materials is no small task. It takes time, thought, and effort. Nonetheless, the use of such materials in the development of learning activities brings a true cultural and linguistic experience to the classroom. As students read these personal accounts, they mirror the act of receiving a letter from a foreign penpal. As they listen to tapes or oral reenactments, they become attentive listeners in real conversations. When students begin to expound upon their reactions to what they read or hear, and even share related life experiences, they become active participants in new conversations. In essence, students stay interested because the information matters. As described in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century,* it will matter in the foreign language classroom, in the history classroom, in the science classroom, in the home, and in the community. The people who share the ideas will matter too, because they are real. It is not necessary for teachers to wait for a select few to publish manuscripts, books, or pedagogical materials; they can gather their own sources, on a large scale or small, and help their students connect to unique new worlds.

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3
Information into Action: Ideas for the Business Language Class

Judith Rusciolelli
Middle Tennessee State University

Introduction

Our knowledge about foreign language acquisition has grown considerably in the past few decades. Researchers have investigated the mental, emotional, and social processes that influence and facilitate mastery of a foreign or second language. We know that there are predictable stages of acquisition of grammatical structures (VanPatten, 1992) and that providing "advance organizers" to activate background knowledge can facilitate retention of new material (Ausubel, 1978). The research of Ellis (1988) and Vygotsky (1978) shows that participation in activities of social interaction where meaning is negotiated can hasten language development. Krashen's (1982) theory of the Affective Filter reminds us to create the appropriate learning atmosphere, while Asher, Kusudo, and de la Torre (1974) emphasize the need for physical movement to aid learning. The standardized proficiency levels of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages establish objectives and methods by which we can evaluate our efforts. These are but a few of the principles that guide our current classroom instructional strategies.

While there is widespread agreement concerning these principles, creating communicative classroom activities that put them into practice is the challenge that all instructors face, and none more than those who are teaching language for specific purposes. The business language class has become a part of the regular curricular offerings of most colleges and universities, as well as some secondary schools. This class offers special challenges because the content itself is cognitively demanding and unfamiliar to the average student. We are no longer discussing the topics of daily activities, ordering a meal, or asking directions. The business course covers legal classifications of companies, administrative procedures, documents for transportation of goods, economics, finance, insurance, employment practices, and, of course, the unique customs and values that underlie each culture's methods of doing business (Doyle, Fryer, & Cere, 1991; Fajardo & González, 1995; Galloway, Labarca, & Rodríguez, 1998; Pascal &

Rojas, 1996; Sallese & Griffin, 1988; Tcachuk 1992). There may be business majors enrolled in the course who have some knowledge of these concepts, but many of the students are language majors who want to enhance their vocabulary and knowledge for practical purposes, and their familiarity with business concepts is limited. To make the idea of business and commerce come alive for these students presents significant challenges.

In response to some of these challenges, the following ideas have been successfully used in an introductory Spanish for Business course. In this article the examples are oriented to Spanish, but the ideas are equally adaptable to business courses in other languages. The class is offered at the third year, fifth semester level. While it is possible to introduce business vocabulary in elementary level courses, readily available texts and ancillary materials are targeted for the intermediate level. The rationale is that students will have some mastery of the basic structures of the language and can now focus on learning new content. Additional language practice is definitely needed, however, since many students function orally at the low- to mid-intermediate level. To solidify the intermediate skills and move toward advanced/superior language abilities, oral activities should focus on describing, stating facts, narrating, reacting, comparing, persuading, and hypothesizing. Most of all, the students require situations in which to put the new vocabulary and concepts they are learning into practice, and the activities described in this article are oriented toward transforming course content into interactive communication.

Motivational Activities

A good way to begin any course is to find out what students already know about the topic. A true/false questionnaire referring to many of the issues that will be covered in the course serves this purpose. It includes factual questions concerning definitions of terms, decision-making procedures, banking habits, as well as cultural issues regarding negotiation practices. (See Appendix A for the complete survey.) Students answer the questions individually and then compare and explain their answers with a partner in the target language to the best of their ability. After pair discussion, the instructor asks for a show of hands of the true or false selection for each item and then gives the correct answer. The pedagogical purpose behind this activity is that of an "advance organizer." It starts the students thinking about the subject and encourages them to use their current knowledge and to make intelligent guesses. The conversational level can range from a simple "I believe that it is true or false" to more detailed attempts to explain an opinion. The conversation helps students to be at ease with each

other and to recognize that they all have some correct and incorrect notions about the topic, thus breaking down some of the "affective filters" which can deter language acquisition. This exercise also serves to introduce and to preview the concepts that the course will cover, creating interest and curiosity. While correcting the answers, the instructor can choose to give a brief explanation, or to hold it in suspense, encouraging students to be alert to the answer as they progress in the course material.

Developing motivational activities based on what students know about their own culture is an effective way to introduce concepts of another culture. Students can refer to etymological dictionaries to discover the history of the English word "business" and the corresponding target language word. They will learn that "business" derives from a Frisian term that means "busy, fully occupied" (Onions, 1966). Thus, it implies action, a verbal concept. The Spanish word "negocio," on the other hand, is a noun, and derives from "otium," which evolved into "ocio," meaning "repose" and "leisure time" (Corominas, 1967). The prefix "ne" adds a negative connotation, taking time away from pleasurable activities. Asking students to draw some conclusions about cultural implications and attitudes toward business based on word meaning provokes interesting discussion and begins to delineate the different approaches to doing business between the United States and the Hispanic world. There are various ways to interpret these differences. One often hears the opinion that the Hispanic world dislikes work and tries to avoid it. Another interpretation is that Hispanics separate work and leisure time, with the two being mutually exclusive. What does seem to occur in reality is that some pleasure will always be included in carrying out work. Business and pleasure can be mixed in the Hispanic world. There is always time for a pleasant lunch with business associates; meetings usually begin with conversation about personal life. Family activities at times take precedence over work obligations. American culture, however, tends to "stick to business" and to stay active and focused until the job is finished. Pleasure comes after the work is done. At times it seems that Americans do not separate work from other forms of "busyness," engaging in busy activities even during leisure time. This conversational activity may be a challenge for the students since it will involve higher level thinking skills and hypotheses that students may not be able to express easily as yet. Thus, use of some English may be warranted here. The instructor can, however, summarize their ideas in Spanish and ask students to repeat them, or may dictate them so that advanced language structures and vocabulary are used. [1]

A third activity to motivate and orient students to the course is to have them hypothesize about their ideal job. The question "What would be your

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ideal job or career, and why would you choose it?" starts them thinking about the future with no limitations. The responses usually reveal their true interests, talents, and values. Frequently, many do have entrepreneurial desires which fit into the course content about banking, commerce, imports and exports, and marketing, for example. Following up with questions about salary, length of time to achieve their goals, and expectations of job satisfaction offers practice in topics and structures of advanced and superior level.

Action Activities

Students are now ready to address the specific content of the course, and the following activities offer opportunities to practice, in a communicative way, the topics contained in many business language texts. They emphasize the productive skills of speaking and writing and naturally include the receptive skill of listening and understanding others' statements. A simple beginning activity is telephone communication, a fundamental business skill. Since the answering machine is found in most business offices nowadays, students create their own answer message for a role-play. Student one makes a call, hears the "recorded" message being said by student two, and leaves a message of the name, phone number, time of call, and reason for calling. Student two listens, take notes of the message, and then calls back to answer the question or set up an appointment. The roles are then reversed.

If a unit on the stock market is included, investing an imaginary $10,000 in the stocks of companies of the target-language countries offers insights into how the process works. A local broker can provide the trading codes for these companies. Students monitor the fluctuation of stock prices of their investments on the World Wide Web or in newspapers. Every week they compare their earnings and losses with those of classmates.

Writing a résumé in the target language helps build vocabulary and shows the differences in data included and excluded in the two cultures. Students may list their authentic experience, or they may create an imaginary résumé. Students use the résumés to role-play a job interview. Begin by having the class brainstorm the common questions asked in job interviews along with possible responses. Want ads for jobs from a Spanish language newspaper add authenticity. Description, past narration, and persuasion in paragraph-length discourse are the language functions used in this activity.

These same language functions can be practiced for the topic of import/export regulations and the legal forms and documents which most

business texts treat. Since the transportation of goods often goes awry, a useful role-play seeks a solution for the delivery of damaged goods. One student describes the condition of the goods and asks for replacement of the product and reimbursement of shipping costs, and the other student denies responsibility for the problem and asks questions about the delivery forms. The aim is to resolve the dilemma amicably.

Labor bargaining also requires use of specialized vocabulary and advanced language skills. To put this into action, the entire class first invents a list of demands, such as excessive overtime and dangerous work conditions, that the workers will present to the administration, and proposes some possible responses that the latter may offer. This preparation gives students a way to begin the conversations and allows their creative ideas to emerge. Students divide into teams of two union representatives and two administrators to debate the issues and reach a compromise. Having students sit across from each other at a table establishes a life-like atmosphere. Presenting a television advertisement in front of the class has often been used in general language classes and is a source of much fun and creativity. It becomes more meaningful in the business language class after students analyze the elements and categories of effective publicity, such as the introduction of a product and a discussion of its fundamental attributes. For listening comprehension practice, students write and deliver a radio announcement. Preparing a telemarketing text for a product can be used for another telephone conversation.

Self-introductions and social small talk are critical business skills to acquire. The following communicative activity is integrative in nature since it combines many linguistic and cultural competencies. First, students choose a business they want to be the president of and give it a name. It may be the same company they used in the preliminary activity suggested earlier. Next, they write a simple, direct three-sentence description of the company's product or service. An example is "Custom CDs. We make compact disks of the music you love. The customers bring us their favorite tapes, and we transfer them to a compact disk. It takes three days, and we guarantee results." They quickly design a business card for the company using appropriately sized paper provided by the instructor. The instructor then verbally creates the context of a gathering sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce where new entrepreneurs can meet each other and describe the product or service they offer. Students move about the classroom networking with each other. The goal is to exchange business cards with others that have similar businesses with which one could cooperate or with someone who would be a potential client. It is important that the conversation

be done in the proper register: that is, to use last names and to speak in the polite "usted" form of address. To facilitate this exchange, students choose two Hispanic surnames and wear a nametag with their new name. They must greet each other, shake hands, and make conversation regarding the weather, where one is from, and comments about the food as would most Hispanic business people. They must avoid jumping directly into business talk, as would be the wont of American business people. The follow-up assignment is to write a letter to the people whose cards they have collected to suggest a future meeting.

The context of an international meeting functions very well for another oral exchange of information based on a written assignment. The mid-term project is to study a Spanish-speaking country in depth from an economic perspective. The research covers demographic data, facts about geographical advantages and limitations, natural resources, predominant industries, imports, and exports. (See Appendix B for description and print resources.) Students prepare a report aimed at hypothetical prospective investors in that country. The report conclusion lists the advantages and disadvantages of investing and establishing a business in that country, along with some suggestions of possible products or services to offer based on the information the students have discovered. Students turn this information into action by taking on the identity of a representative from their chosen country and attending a meeting of an international Chamber of Commerce. The goal is to convince others of the benefits of their country for investment. Once again, a formal tone must be used, along with appropriate greetings and preambles to business talk. Serving soft drinks and making a toast at the beginning of the meeting puts everyone into the right frame of mind to circulate and converse. To bring closure to the activity, students return to their seats and, one-by-one, tell the most interesting item they learned from their project and one fact they remember from another's conversation.

The culminating project of the course is to create a fictitious business and make a portfolio with a business plan. If appropriate, the company would be located in the country of the research project and would be based upon the suggestions for products or services made in the report. It is also acceptable for students to create a business based on their career plans in the United States or to create the business they would own in their ideal world. The plan must address the following issues that have been studied during the course: What type of company is it—a corporation, a partnership, or limited partnership? What is the rationale for this choice? What is the source of funding—a bank loan, personal savings, selling shares? Will the company lease space or construct its own quarters? How many em-

ployees are necessary? Who is the target consumer? Why will this product or service be desired? What marketing strategies will be used? How will the product or service be delivered to the consumer? The plan must include an organizational chart of the company, a logo and letterhead stationery, a description of the product or service, a design for an advertisement for radio, TV, or newspaper, and a want ad to hire employees. (See Appendix C.) Student ideas have included a language translation agency, a pizza delivery service, a bookstore, a beauty spa, a cleaning service, a restaurant, and the manufacture of cosmetics, bluejeans, and leather clothing. All content learned in the course is now being put into action. On the final class day, students show and explain their portfolios to classmates in small groups.

Some anecdotal student comments reveal their satisfaction with the activities and their progress in language ability.[2] "I always enjoy and feel I learn a lot from activities in which students are able to converse. I think this class is well rounded with different projects, papers, videos, conversations." "The final project gives us an opportunity to use what we've learned over the semester in a practical way." "I took this class only because it completed my Spanish minor requirement. I know nothing about business and definitely nothing about Spanish business. But the class turned out to be pretty interesting and I learned a lot. It was also a good thing that we actually discuss our writing assignments with others rather than just turning them in for a grade."

The activities described in this article provide the learner with lifelike situations in which there are information gaps and opportunities for an exchange of course information. They provide advance organizers, create a comfortable learning atmosphere, involve physical activity, and offer speaking practice at the intermediate and advanced level. These activities also practice social amenities that help students feel at ease in the target culture. Content becomes action, and students become active participants in learning business concepts and vocabulary.

Notes

[1] The use of English in the classroom is a pedagogical issue. While we all strive to use the target language as much as possible, there are instances when student expression and comprehension of an important concept may take precedence over language practice, and the aforementioned example is surely one. Moreover, some English usage and translation is called for in a business language course since it reflects the real world. Skilled business people are fluent in more than one language and can switch back and forth between languages as the need arises. Offering our students this authentic practice is invaluable for their later performance and competence. For practice in consecutive interpretation on business topics, see the text *Exito comercial* (Doyle, Friar, & Cere, 1991).

[2] These statements are anonymous comments from student evaluations.

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Appendix A

¿Qué opina usted?
¿Son ciertas o falsas las siguientes afirmaciones?

1. __ Las empresas multinacionales predominan en el mundo hispano.
2. __ Ahora los latinos prefieren usar el teléfono y el fax para las negociaciones.
3. __ Para traducir la palabra inglesa "goods" al español, se puede usar la palabra "bienes."
4. __ A los españoles no les importa el porcentaje de interés que reciben en una cuenta bancaria.
5. __ El remitente es la persona que recibe una comunicación.
6. __ Una buena manera de entrar en negociaciones con un hispano es mencionar a un autor latino que le gusta a usted.
7. __ Las palabras "marketing" y "publicidad" son sinónimos.
8. __ La mayor parte de los gastos del marketing se dedican a los anuncios.
9. __ En la cultura hispana interrumpir una conversación se considera mala educación.
10. __ Implementar las decisiones de negocios con los hispanos es difícil porque el gerente del nivel mediano no quiere aceptar la responsabilidad.
11. __ Formar parte de la Comunidad Europea ayuda mucho a las empresas españolas.

What is your Opinion?
Are the following statements true or false?

1. __ Latinos prefer to use the phone and fax for negotiations.
2. __ To say the word "goods" in Spanish, you can say "bienes."
3. __ Multinational companies predominate in the Hispanic world.
4. __ The percentage of interest on a bank account is not important to Spanish people.
5. __ The remitter is the person who receives a communication.
6. __ A good way to start negotiations with a Hispanic person is to mention the name of a Latino author that you like.

7. __ The words "marketing" and "publicity" are synonymous.
8. __ The major part of marketing costs are for advertisements.
9. __ To interrupt a conversation is considered discourteous in Hispanic culture.
10. __ It is difficult to implement decisions with Hispanics because the mid-level manager does not want to accept responsibility.
11. __ Becoming a part of the European Community greatly helps Spanish companies.

Appendix B
Economic Study of a Country

Objective: To study the geographic, demographic, economic, socio-political, and cultural factors of a Latin American country in order to draw conclusions regarding its potential for business development.

Sources: Minimum of five different sources of information: books, magazines, newspapers, the WEB. At least three must be books with recent information. Give all publication information about your sources, and complete internet addresses in a bibliography.

Format: 10 pages minimum. In report form, easy to read; use headings and categories to list information. (To be written in Spanish)

Categories of Information:

Official name of the country, capital, important cities, official languages, flag.
Geography and climate, size compared to another well known country or state.
Demographic facts: current population, ethnic groups, age divisions, urban/rural, housing, literacy rates, levels of education, employment/ unemployment rates.
Economy: official currency and exchange rate with US$, annual gross domestic product, per capita income, external debt, natural resources, agriculture, industry, services, imports and exports, most important companies, name of important bank, economic trends.
Communications: transportation infrastructure, railroads, highways, airports, airline companies, number of cars; number of telephones, televisions, radios per capita; newspapers, mass media—tv stations, radio stations.
Government/Politics, Current president—minimum three paragraphs.
History: Principal facts, important dates, larger issues— minimum three paragraphs.
Culture: Writers, artists, heroes/heroines, festival days, working hours, daily life customs, marriage, meals, gift-giving, clothing, gestures, ways of doing business, ideas that a visitor should know to adapt well to the society.
Conclusion: Do you believe that the country has good potential for business development? What are the positive and negative circumstancesunder which one does business? Are there trained people to employ? Are there adequate

transportation means? What about the environmental factors? What kinds of business would be the most appropriate? Are there any that you would not recommend? What is the general outlook for the country?

Reference Books for Economic Study of a Country

Cities of the World. (1993). Detroit: Gale Research Inc.
Craighead's international business, travel and relocation guide to countries. (1991). Detroit: Gale Research Inc.
Europa world year book. (1994). London: Europa Publications Ltd.
Moody's international manual. (1997). New York: The Service.
Worldmark encyclopedia of the nations. (1995). Detroit: Gale Research Inc.

Appendix C

My Own Business

Create your own business that sells a product or offers a service. The business can be a realistic or an imaginative one; that is, one that results from your education and career, or one that is part of your dreams. (To be written in Spanish)

Name of the company, a drawing of the logo, a sample of your letterhead, and your business card.

Economic sector, legal status, and amount of capital necessary to establish the business. Estimate the costs. Include a source for funding. Do you have personal savings? Will you get a bank loan? Will you sell shares or form a partnership? Explain the reasons for your choice of funding.

A detailed description (at least one page) of the product or service that you plan to manufacture or sell. Exactly how is the product made? What are the steps to manufacture or offer the product/service? What raw materials do you need? How will it be distributed? Do you need wholesalers? Will you sell directly to the public? How much is the cost to produce your product or service? (Estimate to the best of your ability.) Will you charge by the project or by the hour for a service? What is the final cost of your product/service? How much of that is profit? Do you offer a warranty or guarantee? What do clients do if they are not satisfied?

Who is the target public? Describe your ideal consumer. Age, sex, annual income, urban/rural, social class, religion, leisure time activities. Why do you think the consumer will want your product? What is the necessity?

Space and equipment, office, factory, warehouse, branches. Monthly rent? Buy? Computers, fax, office furniture, delivery vans. How much will these items cost? Include this in your estimate to begin the business.

Organizational chart. Diagram the supervisory chain of command.Do you need assistants? secretaries? drivers?

A sample newspaper want ad to hire employees for your company.

Promotion and publicity. How will the public learn of your company? A sample of an advertisement for print media or radio or television or a text for telemarketing. Will you give samples or discounts to promote sales? Will you sponsor community events for public relations?

Personal reason for establishing this business. Why does it interest you? What attracts you about this project? Why are you enthusiastic about it?

4

Service-learning and Foreign Language Acquisition: Working with the Migrant Community

Susan Wehling
Valdosta State University

Language learning within the context of service-learning presents a unique opportunity for students, educators, and community members alike. While there are numerous definitions of service-learning, the National and Community Services Act of 1990 defines service-learning with a set of four criteria, basic to most service-learning endeavors:

- learning and development through active participation in thoughtfully organized community-service oriented experiences
- a structured experience integrated into the academic curriculum
- an opportunity to apply knowledge and acquired skills in real-life situations
- a sense of caring for others

Most service-learning projects focus on the development of a more civic-minded student whose increased knowledge of democratic values through the service-learning experience benefits the community and society at large (Vadeboncoeur, Rahm, Aguilera, & LeCompte, 1996). Service-learning projects focus on issues such as homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, hunger, teen pregnancy, voter apathy, media literacy, and unemployment (Maybach, 1996; Markus, Howard, & Klug 1993; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994). Service-learning projects may be included in programs from kindergarten to post-secondary institutions. The ideas behind service-learning are not new to education. John Dewey, the father of modern education, endorsed the idea that, in order to develop intellectual capacity and critical thinking skills, learning experiences must be authentic and not divorced from the world outside the class (Dewey, 1997). More than 1105 college campuses, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools are now actively involved in service-learning and campus-community outreach programs (Cohen & Kinsey, 1992).

Because many school systems have service-learning requirements (Markus et al., 1993), service-learning in support of migrant and immigrant communities can provide a national outlet for foreign language students in the United States. The outcomes of service-learning mesh well with the educational guidelines set forth by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the American Association of Teachers of French, the American Association of Teachers of German, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, as part of a national collaborative effort to develop high standards for language learning. The guidelines fall into five categories: communication, cultures, communities, connections, and comparisons (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century,* 1996).

As the focus on a communicative-based approach to language acquisition in the classroom grows, it becomes increasingly apparent that real life exchanges with L1 (native) speakers eventually need to be a part of the language learning experience. The value in the shift in the classroom from a focus primarily about language and structure to the ability to use a foreign language competently in speaking and listening, reading, and writing has been clearly documented and implemented in a variety of ways (Omaggio, 1993; Tschirner, 1996). Students feel frustrated, however, when, after one to three years of foreign language study, they are often unable to communicate to or understand the local L1 speakers. The service-learning component offers an opportunity for dialogue with native speakers whose spoken Spanish differs greatly from classroom tapes but who are more representative of people with whom students might work should they chose to work in the United States and use Spanish in their professions.[1]

Cultures and communities are clearly addressed through service-learning. Students directly experience a variety of traditions, customs, and dialects, particularly those of Central America and Mexico while working in the community. The diversity within Hispanic communities also becomes apparent as students begin to understand cultural subtleties such as whether the family is from a rural or urban background and whether or not Spanish is their first language. By venturing out into the community students see beyond invisible walls which often divide neighborhoods. Having become more familiar with the Hispanic community at home, service-learning students are also more willing to study abroad as the desire to communicate with newly discovered friends provides incentive for them to become fluent. Connections are made between economics, anthropology, history, political science, and other disciplines as students see the actual effects, for example, of the North American Free Trade Agreement on specific individuals.

Many universities have developed specific guidelines for general education outcomes, which often include a demonstration of cross-cultural perspectives and knowledge of other societies, a demonstrated knowledge of principles of ethics, and their employment in the analysis and resolution of moral problems. These national, state, and local mandates challenge foreign language educators to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their language proficiency outside the classroom. This paper will focus specifically on the integration of a service-learning component into an intermediate-level Spanish grammar and conversation class and the possibilities service-learning offers the foreign language educator in general.

The Service-learning Project

This project took place in a largely agricultural region. During summer months over 24,000 migrant workers and their families take up residence to work with tobacco, cotton, and other crops. Many families eventually stay as labor needs are often year- round. There are many Hispanic migrant/immigrant families that speak little or no English. Similarly, there are few native English speakers of Spanish. Educators, health professionals, farmers, and many area business people look to the academic community for help.

In the summer of 1997 an intermediate Spanish class attended a local mass in Spanish. This experience was part of a class assignment in which students learn about culture through observation of traditional Hispanic customs. The professor, who had been translating for a local domestic shelter, brought along a young pregnant mother, who worked as a migrant worker, and her many children as a break from the domestic shelter where they were staying. Students were far more interested in her and her children than in the church service. Next week in class, students wanted to know more. Where was she from? What was she going to do? What were her options? These questions started an ongoing discussion on culture, migrant workers, US-Latino relations, cross-cultural family values, and relationships that continue to this day. As a result of the class's interest, three students volunteered at the domestic violence shelter; others offered to look for housing for the young woman; and once housing was found, others helped clean and prepare the residence. Students expressed interest in incorporating these kinds of activities into a Spanish class, and a service-learning component was added to the fall term syllabus for the Spanish Composition and Conversation class. A smaller scale version of service-learning was added to the Introduction to Spanish class.[2] From the program's inception, students have been actively involved in defining goals and ob-

jectives and in assessing outcomes. This collaborative effort, a goal of service-learning, provides for equal opportunity in articulating needs and goals (Mintz, 1996). In preparation for the service-learning project, students were asked to determine where the Hispanic population resides and where their centers of business are.

Preparation for these classes was new territory, as research regarding service-learning with a foreign language class is virtually non-existent. Once the need within the community was identified, it was necessary to determine whether or not students could successfully fill that need and to determine the length and intensity of the project required, as suggested by Cohen (1994). The needs in this region were basically those of translation services for agencies and families, tutoring and mentoring services for children, especially those unable to speak English in the school system, and work as translators for community educators in the health services. In a survey of those agencies already working with the migrant families, several agencies expressed a desire for student help on a quarterly basis. These agencies included the Department of Human Resources, two Hispanic churches, and the local Migrant Education Agency, which functions under the auspices of the National Migrant Education Program. With the help of these agencies, three families were designated with whom students could work. Students who chose not to participate were provided with an alternate activity.

Three objectives for the foreign language class with a service-learning component included developing grammar skills, building speaking and listening skills, and increasing cultural awareness. In this project, the first objective, to introduce them to as many advanced grammar concepts as possible and increase their vocabulary while improving their writing skills, was achieved with an appropriate grammar text, a journal written in Spanish documenting their service-learning experience, and a final paper, also written in Spanish, evaluating the service-learning experience, in terms of language acquisition, personal development, and benefit to the community. The second, improving their speaking and listening skills, and the third, to increase their interest in and their understanding of Hispanic culture, were accomplished through the service-learning experience and by means of class visitors from the Hispanic community. The discussion on community needs and the comprehension of cultural similarities and differences with the Hispanic community continued throughout the school term. Weekly guest speakers from various community agencies presented, in the target language, their perspective and their history of working with Hispanic people in the county. Students were exposed to a variety of institutions and individuals using Spanish in their professions.[3] Visitors also

allowed students to hear and interact with a variety of dialects and idiomatic expressions. Students were prepared before each visit through a discussion of the agency and/or country associated with each visitor, and they were required to prepare two pertinent questions for each visitor. Students were evaluated on each visitor by means of open-ended exam questions.

Before beginning the service-learning experience, students signed a liability waiver and were required to participate in a multi-cultural conference dealing with migrant children. Students learned about cultural stereotypes regarding migrant workers, important factual cultural differences, and especially about how to work with Hispanic migrant families and children. Cultural aspects such as eye contact, personal space, tone-of-voice, and family matters became an integral part of the courses. (See Appendix A.) Students participated in several games in which different cultural characteristics were practiced. This activity was especially helpful as students, before they went out in the field, were able to discuss how difficult it was, for example, to talk with someone while his or her eyes were lowered. Later, while in the field, students served as cultural liaisons, explaining to perplexed teachers that looking teachers straight in the eye is disrespectful in some Hispanic communities. Selected readings provided background information and a basis for class discussion. In conjunction with class discussions of cultural characteristics specific to the Mexican American Migrant community, students also analyzed Kohlberg's "Iceberg Conception of the Nature of Culture" (Kohlberg, 1981).

Preliminary fieldwork took about three weeks. Arranging schedules for university students, migrant families, and primary and secondary school teachers is a very time-consuming endeavor because of the variety of individual commitments involved. Equally important were the workshops about culturally sensitive issues with respect to time, commitment, and responsibility. Whereas students can choose not to come to class, choosing not to show up when a migrant family is waiting implies a lack of respect which could negatively affect the program (Mintz & Hesser, 1995). In general the Hispanic migrant community tends to be suspicious of the motives others have when working with them and are reluctant to open up to strangers. Students working with adolescents in the junior high found this information especially helpful when those they were mentoring responded with monosyllabic answers for the first two weeks of the project.

After preliminary fieldwork, initial site visits included the agency worker, the professor, the students, and the families and children they would be mentoring. The site preparation was helpful to all parties; the families felt reassured that this was a serious and honest effort to help educate their

children; students felt they were treated in a professional manner. The professor and the agency worker served to facilitate conversation as students were very hesitant to speak initially, and the migrant children and families were also reticent about communicating. This uncertainty on the part of the student about actually speaking in Spanish to a native speaker was one of the biggest obstacles faced at the inception of the program. Students set up either two 30-minute visits or a one-hour visit each week. Institutions were less flexible than families regarding visits, and both required strict guidelines, such as dress codes in the schools and specific and limited hours of visitation with the migrant families. Students who worked with families worked in groups of two to three for safety reasons because the neighborhoods were often classified as "less-than-desirable." Students learned, however, that neighborhoods are often labeled as such based on fear and ignorance of others. Gender divisions were strictly enforced; that is, males worked with male children and females worked with female children, both to comply with cultural norms and to avoid any possibility of sexual harassment issues. As in study abroad and other programs, this program is not and cannot be risk-free.[4] Although the goals for each project varied, for the most part, the university students were asked to translate, interpret, and mentor. University students constantly were required to make use of their knowledge of Spanish and in so doing accomplished an important course goal. The Hispanic migrant community also benefited in improved English and comprehension skills, higher grades, and greater familiarity with the community at large.

Language Skills

Many students, however, were able to apply the linguistic skills learned in class to their fieldwork. Most student groups formed an internal hierarchy based on speaking ability; those most fluent talked most during the initial visits; those less fluent did as the more fluent students advised them. With time, however, all students participated during all visits. Some reported that even though they felt that their spoken Spanish had not improved to the extent they had hoped, what did improve was their attitude towards speaking Spanish outside the class. "This project reminded me of why I had decided to learn Spanish.... I began to look for opportunities to use my Spanish, and I don't feel frustrated when customers come to the restaurant [where I work] and they don't know English." The students in general no longer felt shy or awkward speaking Spanish to strangers. That students were no longer timid regarding speaking Spanish was an extremely important accomplishment, because one of the most frequent impediments

language learners face is anxiety of failure or fear of appearing foolish. "When I read the class syllabus, I thought I would die. I didn't think I could speak with a person who couldn't speak English," said one student in her course evaluation.

In their final papers, students wrote about the problems understanding slang, dialects, and unfamiliar vocabulary. Dictionary usage greatly increased, especially as related to the vocabulary needed in the region, such as picking cotton, cropping tobacco, and spraying pesticide. Those working in educational settings practiced their commands as they gave instructions to the young students. Circumlocution was mutually beneficial to students and their community counterparts. The applicability of lessons learned in the class exercises was magnified as students worked and translated in real-life settings. One student was caught off-guard as she had forgotten her dictionary and was asked to translate the word 'headlice' (a common problem in the area) and explain why the young student was being sent home. Phonetics came into play as students taught English: "Now I understand more about why we learn about vowels and syllables. I had to write down the words with Spanish sounds, using the Spanish 'a' wherever an English 'a' sound was needed." Students taking education courses also got to practice various teaching methodologies in order to facilitate the tutoring process.

Limitations of the service-learning project included the fact that several students improved linguistically only after repeated encouragement. Students who worked with children in the school system felt they spoke less Spanish, as half their time was devoted to speaking English to help with materials, mostly textbooks, written in English. Other students benefited from listening comprehension but had little opportunity to speak due to the fact that the people with whom they worked insisted on practicing English whenever possible. Although most parties involved believe the program is highly successful, these limitations need to be better addressed in the future.

Culture

The greater issues of social justice and a system which has inadequate resources for those on the margin allowed students to reflect in both negative and positive ways on their own cultures. In dealing with issues related to social justice, several students became so deeply involved that their other classes suffered. The extended hours they spent working with the families in dealing with public health agencies and local law enforcement agencies left many students feeling an overwhelming sensation of helplessness and

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frustration. Students expected that change would occur rapidly, and they also expected more sympathy from community officials in matters like checking into exorbitantly high water bills. Therefore, in such a service-learning program, it is important to talk about limits, expectations, and perspectives for all those involved. On a positive note, students were able to facilitate the Hispanic migrant student registration in the city and county schools because they were able to identify the proper Hispanic surname to be used when addressing families. They, in a sense, were teaching culture as they explained to school officials that children should be addressed by the first, not the second, of the two last names on their certification papers. They also helped teachers understand that while many Hispanic migrant children are proficient in speaking English, reading comprehension skills take much longer to develop.

Students, while critical of what they perceived to be a lack of overall concern regarding the less fortunate in the community, commented that they felt very proud of the work that many concerned citizens and agencies were doing. The classroom visitors, the agency leaders, and local educators provided them with positive role models. One student wrote, "There are three words that describe the staff and members of the Hispanic Baptist Mission: friendly, warm and charitable." This student is now president of the campus chapter of the organization "Bread for the World." A recurring theme was the reciprocal nature of the project. The students assisted their Hispanic neighbors, but several were hired by local agencies to continue their work on a paid basis.

Cultural Conflicts

During the program, several cultural problems were encountered. The first involved an African-American student and the family from Oaxaca she was working with. They had called her a "mollita," and she knew it was related to her color. She had asked an affluent Mexican woman, who told her it was a rude racial slur. The director of the local migrant agency explained to the class that while racism exits among some migrant workers, many Hispanic migrant workers use the term "mollita" to describe African-Americans. It is the context and the speaker that determine whether the term was used positively or pejoratively. This family obviously liked the student very much; so she was able to accept their apology, and the agency agreed to work with the family in educating them about racism in the United States.

The second incident involved a group of nursing students who were planning a health project for the migrant camps. The nursing students were

involved in a service-learning project from the School of Nursing, and the Spanish student was translating as part of her foreign language service-learning project. Initially, the nursing students had planned to discuss sexually transmitted diseases. The student translator relayed her concerns about translating this material, as she had learned from class and her field work that health concerns regarding such private matters as intercourse are generally thought of as taboo, especially for discussion between young single women (students) and married men (migrant workers). As a result the nursing students changed their topic to dealing with pesticide poisoning.

One of the challenges still facing the service-learning class is that students tend to perceive their own experience as constituting the truth about the experience of others. One of the most prevalent examples was that students tended to project their childhood as a rule of thumb for others: "Esteban and Pedro need time to be children; they need to run, shout, play, and go to the park. We took them to play football like my Dad used to do with us." Students were initially unable to see the cultural bias implicated in such statements. They also made assertions such as "Hispanic battered women tend to be less emotionally involved," based on their one term experience with one family. The tendency for students to draw on the authority of their own experiences when interpreting data or issues seems to be commonly observed (Vadeboncouer et al., 1996).

Interdisciplinary Benefits

The interdisciplinary nature of the project provided many benefits. Whereas there was a general feeling that this was a worthwhile endeavor, many of the students began to grapple with the larger issues of social and economic justice. In their evaluations and final projects, they were able to contextualize theoretical concerns presented in other disciplines with regard to issues of inequality, national economic measures, and foreign governments. Final papers included commentary on poverty and class struggle issues, spatial constraints, zoning plans, insights regarding public education, and mainstreaming. Students were keenly observant, commenting on various factors: the absence of public transportation, the lack of sufficient lighting with which to do homework, extended family relationships and gender roles, and the higher expectations placed on older children especially in regard to child care. While tutoring Mexican junior high students on the Mexican-American War as described by the American history textbook, students were able to understand the practical applications of theoretical concepts like ethnocentrism and cultural relativity, and the

maxim that history is written by the victors. Along the same lines, university students also learned from their various community partners why they had migrated to the United States and how they viewed the United States. Students learned firsthand that the civil wars they study in Hispanic Civilization classes leave living scars on the survivors who come here for political and economic refuge.

Conclusions

There was a much greater tendency at the end of the term to see the migrant population as individuals, with unique histories, rather than as a group of "dark-skinned, lazy and quick-tempered people" (Skidmore, 1997, p.2). The intimacy of the home visits allowed for a closer inspection of cultural similarities and diversities. The South has generally been considered a place of tradition with a strong emphasis on the family. The students recognized the Hispanic migrant focus on family, especially extended and non-traditional families. Students found many similarities between the South and Latin America. Family and honor were discovered to be common values. The rural background of most Hispanic migrant workers and the respectful attitude toward elders and those in authority were other commonalties which several students noticed. A running comment through final papers dealt with the generosity of the families:

> Lisa and I brought some Halloween treats to Pablo and Angela's [students they were tutoring] house. After studying we were cutting the pumpkin, letting the kids scoop out the seeds when Pablo fell backwards and smashed all the cupcakes. Selena [Pablo's mother] laughed for five straight minutes. The experience touched my heart. My father would have shouted, but Selena just smiled and laughed showing a generosity of spirit and love towards her family and that her "family values" were very centered. (Names have been changed to protect the individuals' privacy.)

Several students were more appreciative of the difficulty of being a working parent and raising children in today's society, especially on a very limited budget. Students were able to reflect on their own progress in developing cultural sensitivity:

> When I first started this project I thought, "Why in the world do they have so many children?" Now I understand I was projecting my own values onto them, and I understand that not only are there many reasons people have big families, but that also there are many

small Hispanic families and many big families outside the Hispanic community.

Six students who were studying to be teachers were very attentive to the classroom environment and the teacher-student relationship they observed. One student was particularly upset to find the Hispanic student she was tutoring to be in a desk facing the wall, isolated from the others. The class discussed ways she might approach the teacher and help her understand that the mandate to mainstream students to help them learn English was not being observed. This university student thought out the issue and in a calm and professional manner was able to work with the teacher and incorporate the Hispanic migrant student into the class circle.

All parties gain from the service-learning experience in the foreign language classroom. Twelve of the 23 students in the class signed up to study abroad in Mexico as a direct result of this experience. Institutional benefits include a higher rate of student retention, as students feel connected to the university and the community. Three of the students were considering transferring to another institution before the service-learning class. After their experiences they decided to stay, because, as they wrote in their evaluations, "It was the best experience I've ever had at this university." "I feel a useful part of the community now." "I never knew there were neat opportunities like these available." The institution also benefits in that its image as a Community Partner is greatly enhanced as students are seen in a variety of settings volunteering to care for others.

The most direct benefit to the language learner is that the hesitancy to speak publicly in the target language is overcome, and once the fears about speaking a second language are dispelled, communication improves rapidly and students are motivated to continue practicing and studying. Roughly 30% of the students continue, in some form or another to work with the migrant community on their own. The migrant children who have received tutoring help through the service-learning project have not only improved their grades but have also made a commitment to stay in school. Migrant families in the region now actively seek to participate in service-learning projects and have been instrumental in providing input for the development of an appropriate English as a Second Language Program in the school system. All the agencies involved in the service-learning project have now formed a community wide committee to address various regional needs such as more bilingual teachers. Service-learning in the foreign language classroom in theory and in practice enhances communication skills and serves to enhance the lives of all involved.

Notes

[1] According to the US Department of Education, the National Migrant Education Program registered over 610,000 official Hispanic migrant children in 1997. For every one child officially registered, there are anywhere from three to six unofficial Hispanic migrants, making the Hispanic population, particularly the Mexican-American migrant population, the fastest growing population in the United States, according to Ed Flueren, State Migrant Program Director (Georgia).

[2] For the beginning Spanish sequence, there is a small-scale service-learning project in which students must spend a total of three hours in the Hispanic community. They may attend a Spanish mass, interview a native speaker (the use of "Spanglish" is allowed at the 101 level), or they can tutor a Hispanic migrant child (one who is relatively verbal in English), or they may attend two showings of Spanish films or attend two Spanish dances. Because for most students this is a required course (unlike the upper division courses), many resent this part of class. However, approximately 60% agree that it is a very eye-opening and worthwhile experience.

[3] Visitors included doctors, writers, drug agents, and a variety of people, either Hispanic or Non-Hispanic, who use Spanish in their jobs. The classroom visitors helped Spanish minors and majors identify and clarify actual career options and establish contacts.

[4] Liability is an issue, and there is not much written regarding this topic. Students sign waivers, and all possible dangers are clearly explained, such as going to unlit neighborhoods after dark on the weekends. Students who work with schools purchase a $7.00 insurance policy specifically designed to cover anything that may happen to them while at the local schools. There are risks involved, but they are minimized, given that the benefits far outweigh the downfalls.

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Appendix A

(Permission to reprint this information was granted by the Migrant Education Program).

Cultural Characteristics of Mexican American Migrant Children

Eye to Eye Contact. Many Mexican American migrant children will not look at an adult straight in the eye when they are being addressed. This is a show of respect and does not mean they are being rebellious or are not paying attention.

Affection. Young Mexican American migrant children are shown a lot of affection at home. They are constantly being touched, kissed, loved even by strangers. They expect this when they come to school. When teachers do not do this, it is interpreted as a rejection.

Isolation. Mexican American migrant children need a lot of personal attention. When a child is given a workbook and told to work by himself/herself, he/she feels rejected. The teacher, whenever possible, should provide the child with personal attention. At the same time, Mexican American children should be helped to understand that their teachers behave the way they do, because they have different habits and not because they dislike them.

Freedom of Choice.Some Mexican American migrant children when told to choose what they want to do next will end up doing nothing. The teacher may interpret this as a lack of interest and motivation on the part of the student. In fact, what it actually reflects is the children's confusion or lack of knowledge about what to do, since they expect to receive very concrete and explicit instructions from adults. Mexican American migrant children are used to a lot of structure and direction in their activities and will tend to feel uncomfortable in situations in which they are given freedom of choice.

Family. A Mexican American migrant child is very closely linked to his/her family. Just as the individual is prized in North American culture, so is the family in Mexican American culture. The child's primary function is to help the family. Thus, an older child may be kept home from school to care for younger children, or if money is needed, the child may skip school and go to work. When the child goes to school the following day, the North American teacher does not feel the child's excuse is very good. The North American teacher feels the child's

primary responsibility is to go to school, while the Mexican American migrant parents feel that the older child's primary responsibility is to help the family. To North Americans, school is an extension of the home; to Mexican American migrants, school is an entirely different entity.

Family Honor. Family honor to a Mexican American migrant child is extremely important. Many times a Mexican American child is referred to as a García, González, etc. rather than by his first name. If someone insults a member of his/her family, the Mexican American child is expected to defend the family honor by dealing with the offender and, if necessary, by fighting with him/her.

Tone of Voice. The tone of voice is sometimes very important. Many times Mexican American migrant children complain that Anglo American teachers "yell" too much. This could be attributed to the fact that in Latin American cultures, "yelling" is one of the most potent weapons available to a teacher. Consequently these children get upset when the teacher starts yelling without first using other techniques, such as asking them several times in a quiet tone of voice to please stop misbehaving.

How Teachers are Perceived. Mexican American migrant adults and children perceive teachers as important symbols of authority and sometimes are viewed with awe. Teachers are not to be treated as someone equal, but as someone much superior. This is somewhat different from the view of Americans, who see teachers and students somewhat closer in status. In the Mexican American migrant culture one does not bother superiors with too many questions or initiate discussions or conversations.

Repetition . This factor is looked at differently by a North American teacher and a Mexican American migrant child who come from dissimilar cultures. When a Mexican American migrant child is having trouble with pronunciation in English, the North American teacher, believing that the child will succeed only if the Mexican American migrant child keeps on trying (North American cultural pattern), has the student repeat a word several times. The Mexican American migrant student, embarrassed by repeated exposure to his/her mistakes, develops a negative attitude toward the particular word and, by extension, toward the language and the teacher.

5
Paving the Way for a Successful Study Abroad Experience: A Cross-Cultural Orientation Model

Lola Hidalgo Calle and David C. Alley
Georgia Southern University

The number of American university students studying in foreign countries has more than doubled over the last 10 years. According to the Institute for International Education, 99,448 students studied abroad between 1997 and 1998 as compared to only 48,900 between 1988 and 1989 ("Open Doors," 1998). It appears that American high school and university students are beginning to heed the admonition of the late Senator J. William Fulbright who said, "Man's struggle to be rational about himself, about his relationship to his own society, and to other peoples and nations involves a constant search for understanding among peoples and cultures—a search that can only be effective when learning is pursued on a worldwide basis" (Goodman, 1998).

Unfortunately, this pursuit of understanding appears to be largely limited to English-speaking programs, as is indicated by two revealing statistics. First, most students (almost 66%) study in Western Europe, with the largest number of those studying in England. Secondly, of the three leading fields of study for American university students studying abroad, foreign languages ranks a distant third (11%) behind social sciences and humanities (35%) and business and management (14%) ("Open Doors," 1998). For foreign language educators, these data are a cause for concern and raise at least two questions: Why do relatively few foreign language students study abroad? What can foreign language educators do to increase these numbers? Why do so few foreign language students study abroad? At a time when study abroad programs are more numerous and better advertised than ever before, it would seem unlikely that students are unaware of the opportunities. Perception, rather than availability, seems to be the key factor limiting growth. Herron (1982) refers to the "myth of elitism" that has discouraged many students from enrolling in foreign language classes, and a similar myth limits participation in study abroad programs. Foreign language educators have labored long and hard to advocate sec-

ond language study for *all* students. However, study abroad programs, which are integral to the overall acquisition of a foreign language, still labor under the handicap of perceived restricted access.

What can foreign language educators do to encourage more of their students to study abroad? Experience has shown that study abroad programs, organized and accompanied by the local foreign language teacher, result in the enrollment of a wider, more diverse group of students. Education, like politics, is most effective when local in nature; and the familiar face of the school or university French, German, or Spanish teacher can do more to generate interest and reassure anxious students and parents than all the glossy advertising in the world. To their credit, more and more foreign language teachers are organizing their own study abroad programs; and these teachers seek to prepare their students culturally to take maximum advantage of their foreign study experience. To be sure, teaching about other cultures is an integral part of the language teaching enterprise, as is affirmed by the following sections of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning:

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Standard 4.2: Students recognize that cultures use different patterns of interaction and can apply this knowledge to their own culture. (Phillips, 1999, pp. iv-v)

However, there are two significant differences between teaching culture as part of a language class and a cross-cultural orientation program for students who will soon be living in another culture. First, in the language class, cultural concerns compete with the regular language curriculum and often receive only passing attention. In the orientation program, culture takes center stage and as such demands a more intensive and in-depth study. Secondly, the orientation course seeks to develop not only the students' knowledge of the target culture but also their behavior in that culture. As Batchelder (1993) points out, "Students tend to be comfortable intellectualizing about an upcoming overseas experience. While this is not totally useless, it can result in chronic intellectualizing overseas, as if one were still dealing with hypothetical situations and talking about people in re-

mote locations rather than immersed in an actual situation" (p. 61). In the cross-cultural orientation course, on the other hand, the focus is on behavior—behavior that can either endear or alienate a student from host country nationals. Many foreign language teachers lack a systematic approach and effective activities for cross-cultural orientation.

This article will discuss how foreign language teachers can better prepare their students for their study abroad experience through cross-cultural training. Valette (1997) defines four goals in relation to learning about a target culture:

- the development of greater knowledge
- the acquisition of the appropriate cultural etiquette
- an understanding of the differences between the home and the target cultures
- an understanding of the values of the target culture (p. 597)

In the context of a study abroad experience, Batchelder (1993) proposes three additional goals:

- Participants should have memorable, if not life-changing experience.
- Participants should be active researchers instead of passive observers.
- Participants should develop an appreciation for the host culture as well as a new-found appreciation for their own culture. (p. 60)

Without proper preparation, however, participants in study abroad programs often encounter significant obstacles in attaining these goals. Craig Storti, in his imaginative book *The Art of Crossing Cultures* (1989), presents literary examples of characters failing to adjust to their new surroundings:

- **On the dietary habits of foreign peoples:** "There is nothing so vile or repugnant to nature, but you may plead prescription for it in the customs of some nation or other. A Parisian likes mortified flesh; a native of Legiboli will not taste his fish until it is quite putrefied; the civilized inhabitants of Kamschatka get drunk with the urine of their guests whom they have already intoxicated; the Nova Zemblans make merry on train oil; the Greenlanders eat in the same dish as their dogs." Tobias Smollet. *Travels through France and Italy* (cited in Storti, 1989, p. 13)

- **On the dining customs of the French:** "I am induced to make this observation because the noon dinners are customary all over France. They cannot be treated with too much ridicule or severity for they are hostile to every view of science, to every spirited exertion and to every useful pursuit in life." Arthur Young. *Travels in France* (cited in Storti, 1989, p. 19)

- **On the unfamiliarity of a new country:** "Kynna kept a cheerful countenance, but felt her spirits flag. The alien speech of the passerby, the inscrutable monuments, the unknown landscape, the vanishing of all she had pictured in advance, were draining her of certainty. . . . She had known the world was vast, but at home in her native hills it had had no meaning." Mary Renault. *Funeral Games* (cited in Storti, 1989, pp. 1-2)

The difficulties of living abroad are often surprising to students who expect a magical alchemy of language and cultural understanding with little effort on their part. Wilkerson (1998) describes the disappointment of a group of university students while on a study abroad program in France: "I'd hang around in town," said one participant. "Sometimes I would just sit in town and read or something, and there's people around you, but it's not that easy . . . to meet someone who's French." Even when the students did interact with their French hosts, cultural differences led to numerous conflicts (p. 33).

If left untreated, this cross-cultural disassociation can lead to complete isolation from the target culture, as described by an observer of English expatriates in India: "They carry about with them the plastic bubble of their own culture, and nothing touches them until it has been filtered through the protective membrane of prejudice" (Storti, 1989, p. 31).

Puncturing this monocultural bubble and challenging prejudices and stereotypes is the purpose of the Cross-Cultural Orientation Model. The model is based on the four constituents of Freeman's (1989) decision-making process in language teaching. These constituents include awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills, and their interaction with self, the native culture and the target culture. What follows is an explanation of each aspect of the model with suggested activities.

Awareness of Self, Native Culture, and Target Culture

The goal of this initial phase is to create an awareness in the student of his or her role as a cultural being. Freeman (1989) defines awareness as "the capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given to something" (p. 33). An effective method for developing this awareness in an active, intensive setting is a simulation game. One such game

called *Barnga* (1990) simulates the functioning of cultural norms in the form of a simple card game. Rules of the game are distributed, and the participants practice the game in small groups. Unbeknownst to the individual participants, each group learns the game by different rules; and when the various groups are mixed, conflict ensues. Communication problems are simulated by prohibiting speech and allowing players to communicate only through gestures. In the follow-up discussion, what emerges is a definition of culture as the "rules of the game" that all members of a particular culture implicitly understand and obey. Cultural conflict is understood to occur when outsiders violate these rules.

Attitude

After establishing an awareness of unspoken assumptions that govern the behavior of groups, the next topic of the orientation program is the role of attitudes in determining individual behavior. Kelly (cited in Kramsch, 1983) describes attitudes as personal constructs by means of which a person anticipates events and makes sense of the world around him. The goal of the Cross-Cultural Orientation Program is to instill in the participants those positive attitudes such as openness and flexibility that are highly correlated to successful study abroad experiences. Among the obstacles to these positive attitudes are negative practices, such as reliance on stereotypes. Helping students recognize the presence of stereotypes in their existing attitudes is the next phase in the Cross-Cultural Orientation Model. An exercise for defining the process of stereotyping involves asking students what their first impression is of the following types of people:

- a woman who smokes
- a man who smokes
- a librarian
- a truck driver
- a person who wears glasses
- a person who bites his nails
- a person who wears dark glasses inside the house
- a person who whistles

Following discussion of these universal stereotypes, this exercise can then be expanded to discuss stereotypes of American culture. Heusinkveld (1985) describes an activity in which students design a course on American culture for foreigners. The students receive a list of possible topics from which they choose the most representative. The list might include some of the following:

- George Washington
- Super Bowl
- John Wayne
- Disney World
- Rock Music
- McDonald's
- Cowboys and the Wild West

By discussing these cultural icons, certain positive and negative values are highlighted. For example, John Wayne and cowboys represent individualism and self-reliance; but they also denote violence as means of solving problems. In addition, the limitations of stereotypes as a means of analyzing a culture are emphasized.

A similar activity could then be to have students discuss a list of target-culture stereotypes. It is important to recognize, as Mantle-Bromley (1992) points out, that typical language learners in the United States see their culture as dominant and that consequently their desire for interchange with foreigners is inhibited. However, having seen the limitations of foreign stereotypes of American culture, students should be more willing to question their stereotypes of the target culture. As in all the activities of the Cross Cultural Orientation Model, the guiding philosophy is to build a bridge between the native and target cultures.

Knowledge

At this point students are introduced to an expanded definition of culture, which distinguishes between *surface culture* and *deep culture*. Surface culture contains the elements of the culture that can be most readily observed. According to Frank Gonzales (1988), some of the elements of surface culture are food, holidays, the arts, folklore, history, and personalities. The next activity, a pretest, ascertains the students' level of knowledge about the surface cultural characteristics of the target culture. The following examples are from a pretest for a study abroad group going to Spain:

A. Match the following with their professions or contributions:

1. Cervantes	a. *Guernica*
2. Picasso	b. King of Spain
3. Juan Carlos de Borbón	c. Opera singer
4. Plácido Domingo	d. *Don Quijote*

B. Select the most appropriate answer to the following questions:

1. You are in Seville and you want to eat lunch in a restaurant. What time would you go to eat?

   a) 12:00 Noon b) 2:00 p.m. c) 4:00 p.m.

2. It is 3:00 in the afternoon and you have many errands to do. What should you do first?

   a) go to the bank b) go shopping c) read a book or take a nap

3. Imagine you are in Spain having a beer and an appetizer in a restaurant. It would be cheaper . . .

   a) if you sit at a table b) if you go to the bar c) It doesn't matter.

Following an introduction to surface culture, the concept of deep culture is presented. Students should understand that deep culture is the root of the culture and is composed of the elements that the native cannot logically analyze nor the visitor openly see. According to Gonzales (1988), "Deep culture involves the thoughts and beliefs and actions, the concerns and hopes and worries, the personal values, the minor vanities and the half serious superstitions, the subtle gradations of interpersonal relationships as expressed in actions and words, the day-by-day details of life as it is lived" (p. 34). Some of the more significant elements of deep culture include family ties, ceremony and ritual, health and medicine, concepts of time, religion, and sex roles.An effective means of uncovering some of these elements of deep culture is through the reading and analysis of authentic texts. García (1991) presents a system for guiding students to discover underlying cultural information contained in such common texts as birth and wedding announcements and obituaries drawn from both American and Hispanic newspapers. After reading each text, students fill out grids that highlight relevant cultural information. Comparisons between the American and the target language cultures are then made, and students have to justify their opinions from the data they collected. An example of this procedure applied to the topic of religion in Spanish society would first present announcements of upcoming American and Spanish religious services. Students would then be asked to complete the following grid applied to the two cultures:

	Name of Church	Denomination	Time of Service	Other Activities
1				
2				
3				

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One cultural difference that becomes apparent in the ensuing discussion is the variety of denominations in the United States and the universality of the Catholic church in Spain. Of course the instructor could simply give this fact as part of a lecture/presentation, but the fact that students applied their analytical skills to authentic texts prepares them for their upcoming immersion in the target culture. Garcia underscores the importance of this inductive method by saying that these activities "allowed students to discover and understand different ways of life with different values and traditions, and more importantly, to accept them as valid. They provided the students with the opportunity to compare and contrast their own culture with another and to value a culture different from theirs" (p. 324).

Skills

The final stage in the Cross Cultural Communication Model deals with the development of actual skills that will facilitate the students' entry into the target culture. Among the necessary skills, Batchelder (1993) includes assessing social situations and formulating appropriate responses. Cultural assimilators and role plays are two effective techniques for providing students the practice in the development of these cultural skills. According to Seelye (1976), cultural assimilators present a critical incident of cultural behavior that the foreign visitor finds confusing or conflictive. After reading the episode, the student chooses between several alternative explanations; the teacher provides feedback and further information about the cultural value in question. An example of a cultural assimilator drawn from Spanish culture follows. The correct answer is in italics.

An Incident at a Bar

Martha, an American student visiting Spain for the summer, is in a bar drinking a beer with some friends. She removes a pack of cigarettes from her purse, takes out a cigarette, and lights it. Her friends glance at her and then look away. It is obvious that she has done something wrong, and the rest of the afternoon her friends are decidedly cool toward her. What happened?

A. The group was sitting in a no-smoking section of the restaurant.
B. It is considered impolite in Spanish culture to smoke without offering a cigarette to everyone in the group.
C. Martha's friends were concerned with her health and did not approve of her smoking.
D. Women do not smoke in public in Spain.

Another technique which allows students to practice emerging social skills is the role play. Archer (1986) recommends role play as a means for overcoming *culture bumps*. According to Archer, culture bumps occur "when an individual from one culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture" (pp. 170-171). An example of a culture-bump situation in Spanish culture follows:

Role Play Situation: Who Pays?

You are an American student visiting Spain for the summer, and you are sharing a meal with two Spanish friends. When the waiter brings the bill, you take out your calculator to divide the cost three ways. Your friends immediately begin arguing, because each wants to pay the entire amount. Who pays?

Implicit in this role play are the cultural concepts of responsibility and hospitality, which are brought out in the follow-up discussion.

Conclusion

Traveling to a foreign country is a unique experience that will affect students' lives forever. The Cross Cultural Orientation Model provides a flexible framework for providing the tools necessary to prepare for the study abroad experience. Beginning with exercises for developing cultural awareness, and concluding with realistic simulations of cross cultural encounters, participants are prepared to live in another culture and derive the greatest benefit from their time abroad. As Batchelder (1993) states, "We want each student overseas to feel that he or she is lucky to be in that particular place" and "we want the host families, communities and institutions to say at the end, 'These are good young people. We are glad they came'" (p. 60).

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6

Connecting Beyond the Classroom: Using the Internet to Conduct Independent Study Language Courses

Carolyn Gascoigne Lally
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Introduction

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* document, released in 1996, has had considerable impact on the language teaching profession in a relatively short period of time. Indeed, the "five Cs" identified in the *Standards* (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Community) have already influenced the development of language-specific (Amores & Medley, 1998) and state-specific standards (*Foreign Languages*, 1996), and have been applied to issues such as articulation (Lally, 1998) and the teaching of culture (Abrate, 1998).

At its core, the Connections standard encourages foreign language students to connect with other disciplines and acquire information. Equally important, however, in this, the age of the Internet, satellite transmissions, and cellular communication, is the need to forge connections that extend beyond the classroom. It is this extramural type of connection that is the focus of the following study. Specifically, a model of a Web-based independent study course in French is presented as a first step toward a distance learning format that allows student and teacher to connect to one another beyond the classroom and encourages connections with a vast array of new resources via the Internet.

Independent Study: Then and Now

Well before e-mail and the Internet, it was predicted that society would soon demand "an educational system characterized by individualized instruction [with] independent study as [a means of] appropriate preparation for self-initiated life-long learning" (Loughary, 1967, p. 9). Independent study, also known as individual learning or self-directed study, can be defined as a student's "self-directed pursuit of academic competence in as autonomous a manner as he [or she] is able to exercise" (Dressel &

Thompson, 1973, p. 1) and often covers material not normally a part of the curriculum. In other words, it is a means of teaching students to learn how to learn, as well as providing more adequately for individual differences (Beggs & Buffie, 1965).

In our new information age, characterized by the virtually unlimited resources of the Internet, students must learn how to locate information as opposed to merely memorizing it. A well executed independent study project can assist students in becoming researchers and producers of information, rather than simply consumers of knowledge (Alexander & Hines, 1967).

Historically, independent study programs have been ill-defined, possessing a diversity of forms and goals. For example, "projects have included study of a topic not covered by an existing course; probing deeply into a topic which has been introduced in a course; reading more books; writing more papers; [and] doing more experiments" (Dressel &Thompson, 1973, p. 4).

An additional problem with many independent study courses is the potential lack of continuity. Certainly, some independent study projects can and are put off until the final weeks of a semester and are then frantically completed with minimal learning taking place.

Given these shortcomings, university faculty have been slow to embrace independent study. While surveying 372 colleges and universities, Dressel and Thompson (1973) received various comments and opinions from faculty around the United States concerning independent study. One respondent, in particular, felt that the "sad thing about independent study is that it degenerates into a term paper with more time to do it than you would have in a course" (p. 101). Another respondent, with a more positive and structured vision of independent studies, provided the following description of his own experience:

> We sit down at the beginning of the term and detail what it is that [the student] is after and what I want him to demonstrate. Then, in many cases, further contacts depend on how he's progressing. If he has run into snags—I suggest a book and he may report that it is no good, but he often finds some other material or discovers something new—then we communicate with each other about that. If he finds something that he doesn't understand or which seems contradictory, he will come in and we'll talk together about it. (p. 83).

This description of one faculty member's approach to independent study programs reveals the importance of connections beyond the classroom as a key ingredient for the success of an independent study program. For instance, this professor identifies the need for an initial connection: "We sit

down at the beginning of the term," and for continuous connections between professor and student throughout the period of study, "further contacts depend on how he's progressing"; "then we communicate with each other about that," "he will come in," and "we'll talk together about it."

The following pages propose a means of strengthening and increasing the number of extramural connections between teacher and the independent study student, as well as between student and the outside world, via the Internet. Indeed, the independent study, although long considered the step-child of the instructional process (Beggs & Buffie, 1965), can be an ideal environment for pilot testing technological applications to language learning and electronic "connection building."

Distance Learning

Distance learning is generally described as an interactive, educational process between a student and teacher who are separated by a measurable distance (Brown & Brown, 1994; Threlkeld & Brzoska, 1994). According to Ljosä (1993), it can also be regarded as a simulation of classroom activity whose quality "depends to a large extent on the frequency and the quality of the interaction" (p. 31) between student and teacher.

Reddy (1993) identifies the following characteristics of the typical distance education program:

- the quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process;
- the influence of an educational organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services;
- the use of print, audio, video, or computer to unite teacher and learner;
- the provision of two-way communication, so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue; and
- the quasi- permanent absence of a learning group throughout the length of the learning process, so that people are usually taught as individuals (p. 239).

Just as connections beyond the classroom are essential for the successful independent study program, so do we find them at the core of distance education. In fact, it is the communication medium that forms a connection between student and teacher and facilitates the teaching/learning process. Moreover, the two-way communication characteristic of many distance education programs "necessitates the use of technology to medi-

ate this interaction" (Garrison, 1993, p. 201) and serves as an electronic connection or tie spanning a physical distance.

Other similarities between independent study and distance education programs include an evolving concept of the teacher from that of instructor to that of facilitator (Knowles, 1973) and a standard set of questions facing the instructor, such as:

- What are the costs?
- What kinds of students will this benefit?
- What factors influence instructional effectiveness? and
- Do I have to teach differently? (Threlkeld & Brzoska, 1994)

Because of the similarities between these two non-traditional instructional programs as well as the daunting start-up costs facing most distance learning projects, I propose that the foreign language teacher fuse distance learning pilot endeavors with the independent study format. According to Jenkins (1993), "the novelty of the distance education process is such that mistakes made at the design stage can only be rectified later at great cost, counted in time and energy, as well as money. It is therefore important that those involved in program design and development are well prepared" (p. 318). A small-scale distance/independent study project can then serve as a safe and structured environment for preparing language teachers for more elaborate distance learning programs. Moreover, Brown and Brown (1994) believe that tomorrow's student "will truly be an explorer, a researcher, a huntsman who ranges through the new educational world of electrical circuitry" (p. 4). For this reason, a fusion of independent study, which encourages independence, exploration, and self-directed learning, with the electronic domain of distance learning, can help prepare our students for the future.

Distance learning programs, as they exist today, are designed to reach large numbers of students at a distance whereas independent study programs are, by definition, designed for smaller numbers. However, by taking advantage of the technology usually reserved for distance learning, the traditional independent study course can be offered to more students, cover more topics, and be conducted with increased contact between student and instructor.

The remainder of this article presents a model of an independent study/ distance education course offered in French at the post-secondary level. This endeavor demonstrates how the technology of distance education coupled with the goals of independent study can serve both the instructor and the student by promoting both independence and connections through an extramural educational environment.

A Model

The Student

A sophomore, who had just completed a year of intermediate (second-year) French study and who arrived as a freshman with two years of high school French experience, requested an independent study with the author. The student was a 19-year-old male who was considering a minor in French.

The rationale for offering independent study to this particular student was twofold: 1) Tthe student's work schedule prevented him from enrolling in any of the regularly scheduled French courses, and 2) There was a particular theme—not specifically treated in our regular course offerings—that the student wished to investigate.

The Course

The instructor and student met in person prior to the beginning of the semester during which the independent study would be conducted to discuss goals. Together, it was decided that the general content of the "course" would be French civilization and history and that the student would receive three credit hours at the third-year, or 3000 level, upon its completion. To maximize the student's opportunity for self-direction, he was prompted to create his own learning agenda for the semester, to include possible books, films, and Web sites. By the beginning of the semester in question, the student submitted, via e-mail, a general theme for the course: Queens of France; a working materials list: books, films, Web sites; and a description of projected final projects: two 10-page papers (one in French and one in English) coupled with weekly dialogue with the faculty member.

Dealing with Distance

Thus far, the described course appears to be little or no different from most independent studies. When it is added that the teacher and student did not see each other a single time during the semester of study, this still does little to differentiate this particular independent study from so many others. Perhaps the most important distinguishing characteristic is the simple fact that the instructor and student maintained a constant connection in the form of weekly communications—at their most infrequent—without ever meeting in person.

The key element in this fusion of independent study goals with distance learning technology is the two-way communication between student and teacher. For Garrison (1993), what truly "makes distance education possible is the two-way communication technologies it uses to mediate instruction" (p. 201). In the present independent study, the two-way com-

munication technology employed was the university e-mail system and a Web-based template.

Templates are semi-developed applications of prewritten software. What is useful for the language teacher short on time or technological savvy is the template's ability to create a course Web page for the instructor. For this particular project, the instructor chose to use the Nicenet Classroom Assistant, one of numerous software templates available on the Internet. A few of the many other available templates include Web Course in a Box, Claris K-12 Education Connections, and the Powerpoint Educational Template series.

Reaching the template home page at < http://www.nicenet.org/ >, the instructor entered basic information including the course (or independent study) title, semester, instructor's name and e-mail address. The template clearly indicates when and where relevant data are to be entered. Upon supplying the requisite information, Nicenet produces a "class key," or numeric code, for the newly developed course page. After creating a course page through the template, the instructor sent the Nicenet Web site address and class key to the independent study student via campus e-mail. Equipped with the address and code, the student had access to the course Web page. When the student logged on to Nicenet for the first time, he was also prompted to enter his name and e-mail address.

The template allows for the posting of course schedules and documents, and supports class conferencing, link-sharing, and e-mail. Documents can also be cut and pasted from any word processing file. Link-sharing preferences may be adjusted such that both students and teacher are able to add links, or that only the instructor may do so. Because this was an independent study course designed to promote exploration as well as foster connections between student and teacher, and between student and the outside world, the student was strongly encouraged to research relevant sites and add links to the course page.

In addition, the independent study student was prompted to post topics for discussion, questions, responses, and various reactions onto the class conferencing component of the Web page. Although the template supported live conferencing, in this course the student and teacher read and responded to each other's comments through e-mail. Each person was required to both post and respond at least once a week and on a given day.

Limitations

Throughout the semester in which the independent study took place, the student and teacher were able to successfully maintain regular and meaningful contact via the Internet. One problem, however, was the fact

that at certain times of the day, and even on two entire days in particular, neither student nor instructor were able to access the course Web page after entering the class key. Nicenet administrators claim that when an unusually high number of users simultaneously log on to their templates around the world, the system may temporarily freeze. A second limitation was the rigid format of the course Web page. Both the instructor and student had to work within the parameters of the template and thus were unable to add graphics or photographs.

Outcomes

The electronic connection that facilitated weekly communication between student and teacher allowed the student to engage in self-directed learning without feeling isolated or abandoned. Because "many students enter into a new learning situation feeling a deep need for the security of a clear structural plan" (Knowles, 1975, p. 37), the use of the Internet and e-mail encouraged healthy dialogue and provided reasonable guidance for the independent study student. Whereas use of the Internet facilitated "connections" to the outside world, e-mail facilitated "communication" with the instructor. In this particular case, weekly discussions encouraged the student to reflect upon the course topics, verbalize ideas, ask and answer questions, and engage in on-line research by searching and posting links. At the very least, the electronic connection prevented the course from "degenerat[ing] into a term paper" (Dressel & Thompson, 1973, p.101), which was completed "in the last three weeks of the semester" (p. 97).

In an informal course evaluation, the student revealed that the most favorable aspects of the independent study were: 1) the fact that all correspondence was conducted over the Internet, so that the student did not have to wait for office hours in order to communicate with the faculty member; 2) the student's ability to direct his own learning; and 3) the regular and timely feedback from the professor.

Conclusion

The Internet and other electronic "networks make it possible to conduct classroom [and independent study] activities free from the constraints of time and place" (Markwood, 1994, p. 205). Equally important, however, is the role of technological networks in creating and strengthening connections between language students and the outside world. Although these networks facilitate the establishment of electronic connections, one of the greatest temptations for the language teacher is to "duplicate the tried-and-true formulas for instruction [that we use in our] traditional classroom"

(Eastmond, 1994, p. 97). For this reason, independent study offers a flexible and manageable environment for the pilot testing of various technological applications and distance education programs.

The Web-based independent study course described above has been presented as a sheltered and inexpensive move toward a distance learning environment that allows student and teacher to strengthen extramural connections with one another while prompting the student to forge connections with authentic language resources using the same medium.

Although this description focused upon a post-secondary French course, the model can most certainly be applied to other languages and levels of instruction such as advanced high school classes where insufficient enrollment often prompts the formation of a third- or fourth-year combined course, thus reducing opportunities for in-depth or individualized study.

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7

Academic Alliances and Articulation: Communicating Across Educational Sectors

Clara Krug
Georgia Southern University
Anne Fountain
Peace College

In Theory

In 1981, Claire Gaudiani[1] envisioned local groups—*academic alliances*—of foreign language teachers in grades kindergarten through college. Each alliance would serve many purposes: fostering collegiality among faculty who might not otherwise meet professionally, embracing colleagues as they make the transition from training to practice in the profession, maintaining and improving teaching techniques, planning and implementing articulated curricula, and empowering faculty to take primary responsibility for excellence in their discipline.

Monthly meetings would have two foci: keeping faculty up-to-date in their profession and addressing local concerns. At each meeting, members would discuss abstracts of journal articles related to their discipline. Then they would work together to devise solutions to concerns identified by alliance members. As each alliance worked to maintain and improve instruction in its locality, it would concomitantly address issues of state-wide and national importance (Gaudiani & Krug, 1982, pp. 3-4).

Eileen Burchell and Ellen Silber, of the Tarrytown-Lakeland (NY) Foreign Language Teachers Association, theorize about an additional focus that may benefit postsecondary faculty:

> For those of us who genuinely enjoy teaching beginning language courses, the Tarrytown-Lakeland collaborative (and others like it) provides a natural setting in which we come together with colleagues of like mind, the majority of them from the schools. As college teachers, we have found renewal through these regular discussions about elementary language teaching, because it is a subject often devalued by our professional college/university culture. (1991, p. 279)

Postsecondary faculty who teach elementary-level courses may feel isolated and might benefit from ongoing discussions with other alliance members.

Finally, because of participation in an alliance, members would be better prepared to participate in conferences of state, regional, national, and international associations. And, equally important, they could use alliance meetings to present summaries of important issues raised or addressed at the conventions of these organizations.

In Practice

As alliances began to meet, almost none met monthly. Most have not focused on reviewing journal articles. Instead, they have emphasized local concerns related to "a proficiency-oriented curriculum," "the college preparatory curriculum," "teacher certification requirements," "shifting/declining enrollments," and "standards." These issues are directly related to perhaps the most crucial one of all, articulation of curricula both within (horizontal) and across (vertical) educational sectors.

As noted by Ellen Silber, former Director of Academic Alliances in Foreign Languages and Literatures,[2] alliances have found that administrators can be crucial members. They can provide meeting space, supplies, and modest financial assistance. They can also provide incentives by awarding staff development credits for regular participation or by including participation as a component in decisions about tenure, promotion, and annual evaluation for merit pay (1987, p. 3). Equally important is the "receptive" role that administrators may play. Many may not have a background in the humanities; many may not have studied a foreign language. By attending alliance meetings, even occasionally, they gain knowledge about issues related to foreign language curricula and pedagogy and about the professionalism with which faculty address these issues.

Approximately half of the 60 academic alliances in foreign languages and literatures are in the Southeast. From the outset, they have been especially active in fostering articulation of foreign language programs. The following two case studies are examples.

The Wake County Academic Alliance (est. 1981)

Founded at North Carolina State University, the Wake County Collaborative was one of the first three alliances. Through the years, it has continued to fulfill its goals of providing opportunities for collegial collaboration across educational sectors and fostering articulation of programs. The Wake County Alliance encompasses the public and independent schools

in Wake County, the colleges and universities comprising the Cooperating Raleigh Colleges, and some schools outside Wake County. The K-12 schools in the area serve a large, diverse population. The postsecondary community includes historically black institutions, a large public university, and private colleges for women. Typically, the alliance has met seven times a year, with 25-30 members attending meetings. Incentives for participation include renewal credits for licensure, language-specific conversation groups, and networking possibilities. Members serve as Chair of the Wake County Collaborative on a rotating basis. Foreign language specialists have provided support. The alliance publishes a newsletter, *Wake Up!*,[3] and is establishing a web site.[4]

To improve articulation between secondary and postsecondary programs, members helped revise the French and Spanish placement exams offered by North Carolina State University. Although the revision process did not create perfect placement documents, the collaboration helped alliance members identify skills that college faculty should expect of incoming students with two years or more of foreign language study in a North Carolina high school.

The most important initiative toward improving articulation occurred between 1992 and 1994, when members examined language instruction from kindergarten through college. The first year, they studied K-grade 12 programs in the alliance's service area. A grant from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) supported this initiative by allowing members to invite the nationally known linguist and testing specialist Protase "Woody" Woodford[5] to address the alliance. He emphasized that, to gain maximum proficiency, a student should begin language study early and develop skills from the early grades through college. Certainly, to provide such a progression, both horizontal and vertical articulation would be necessary.

In 1992-93, teachers at all levels (K-16) addressed issues related to articulation: Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES) programs, culturally authentic materials, and evaluation of professional degree programs available for certification. The final meeting was dedicated to another important component of articulation, "the endorsement" in foreign language developed by the Second Languages Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. It was intended to recognize a high school student's proficiency at the *intermediate high* level of the scale developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)[6] and to assist in placement of students in college and university language courses. To earn the endorsement, a student had to complete an oral proficiency interview and a writing sample at the *intermediate high* level. While

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it was in effect, a number of North Carolina colleges used the endorsement to place students in foreign language classes.

The following year, with a second grant from the SREB, the alliance sponsored a conference, "Putting Articulation into Practice: Foreign Languages K-16 and Across the Curriculum." Its focus was articulation in both the Southeast and the nation. The March 1994 conference elicited participation from members of North Carolina alliances and faculty from other states. The first day, Clara Krug and T. Ray Shurbutt, both of Georgia Southern University, provided a perspective on the Southeast. Krug described local and state-wide articulation in foreign languages provided by the approximately dozen "Academic Alliances in Georgia"[7] since the network's inception in 1985. Shurbutt used Latin American Studies to show how articulation can take place across the curriculum, involving historians, language and literature specialists, anthropologists, and political scientists in common projects.

The second day, Jean Carolyn Williams, President of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), emphasized the need for teachers to stay in touch with each other, both at the local level through academic alliances and at the national level through language-specific organizations. She also stressed the growing importance of FLES programs and the need to learn more about the methodologies used at this earliest rung of the articulation ladder. Then, five specialists from the State Department of Public Instruction provided details about how articulation affects students at various levels of instruction. They also emphasized the need for collaboration between faculty in teacher-preparation programs and teachers in the schools.

Participation in the Wake County Collaborative remains strong. Topics at meetings have included demonstrations by FLES teachers, reports about the North Carolina Governor's Language Institutes, presentations by National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship recipients, lectures about art, dance lessons, descriptions of study-abroad programs, an introduction to the national standards, and an "Ask the Collaborative" component intended to help answer members' questions about professional concerns. Many of these topics are directly related to articulation.

The Southeast Georgia Collaborative (est. 1983)

This academic alliance has met four or five times annually since spring 1983. It includes teachers of Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish in public and independent elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and two- and four-year postsecondary institutions in an eight-

county area. With the exception of Savannah/Chatham County, the alliance's service area is rural. Membership on the Steering Committee is voluntary. Typical attendance at alliance meetings is 20 to 30.[8] Rather than review professional literature, in general, members have preferred to address local issues: textbook adoption, the newly adopted College Preparatory Curriculum, the Georgia Department of Education's Quality Core Curriculum, oral proficiency, Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) and Foreign Language Exploration (FLEX) Programs, and national standards.

In 1985, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia adopted the College Preparatory Curriculum proposed by Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs W. Ray Cleere.[9] As a result effective in Fall 1988, two years of instruction in a foreign language became an entrance requirement for students enrolling in a public postsecondary institution in the state. While the requirement seemed like a golden opportunity, there were not enough certified teachers to implement it. Where would administrators find qualified instructors? They found them among English, social science, and science teachers who had once studied a foreign language for a few years.

To help prepare these soon-to-be foreign language faculty, on behalf of the Southeast Georgia Collaborative, Georgia Southern University submitted two grant proposals for summer language institutes: one for teachers of French, another for teachers of Spanish. Alliance members helped devise the format, reviewed drafts of the proposals, and wrote letters of support. Each institute provided five weeks of immersion in either French or Spanish from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (including lunch), with two-hour sessions about pedagogy twice a week. Using a modified oral proficiency interview, institute faculty gauged participants' proficiency at both the beginning and the end of the five weeks. The Georgia Department of Education fully funded both institutes in Summer 1986. Twenty faculty participated in each; some were alliance members. During the 1986-87 academic year, the Southeast Georgia Collaborative followed up these institutes with three programs related to the College Preparatory Curriculum: an overview of the place of foreign languages, language-specific discussions about the transition between secondary and postsecondary curricula, and a session designed to relate the language-specific discussions to the overview provided at the first meeting.

Just before the foreign language entrance requirement went into effect, the Georgia Department of Education adopted its Quality Core Curriculum in each academic discipline. The foreign language curriculum emphasized *proficiency*, a word that has become a standard vocabulary item in our profession, but which, in 1988, relatively few foreign language

faculty knew. During the 1987-88 academic year, the Southeast Georgia alliance served as host for a "Focus on Proficiency" workshop funded by the United States Department of Education. Over a two-day period, in both plenary and small-group sessions, consultants from ACTFL demonstrated techniques for improving students' listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, and composition skills. Participants devised activities that they could implement in their own classrooms.

By 1990, this alliance's members were accustomed to collaborating to improve foreign language instruction at the high school and postsecondary levels. However, in the first years of the Southeast Georgia Collaborative's existence, when administrators were searching for faculty to teach high school classes, who imagined that this rural area would offer foreign language study in the elementary schools? That is exactly what happened. By 1992, FLES and FLEX programs were in place. To share information about them, in early 1992, four elementary school teachers presented the session "Successful FLES-FLEX Programs in Our Local Area: A Panel Discussion by Classroom Teachers." When the alliance invited its state legislators to discuss an impending bill related to state-wide FLES/FLEX funding in public schools, members learned that all three men strongly supported the concept of foreign languages in the elementary school, beginning in the early grades. The meeting became a strategy session, with legislators suggesting steps for teachers and parents to take as they lobbied for passage of the bill. When the law took effect, the funding that it provided helped establish FLES/FLEX programs in urban, suburban, and rural areas, including additional ones in the Southeast Georgia Collaborative's service area.

Since 1983, members of the Southeast Georgia Collaborative have done just what their alliance's name suggests: they have "collaborated." To establish and maintain local and national standards for student performance, Phillips and Brown recommend such ongoing collaboration: "The profession needs to engage in a collaborative discussion regarding the program goals across instructional levels. We need these discussions to establish not only seamless instruction, but also seamless learning" (1996, p. 98). Three programs during the 1998-99 academic year helped members of the Southeast Georgia Collaborative address concerns related to instructional goals specified in *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, a publication designed to help establish "seamless learning."

At the first meeting, "Coming to Grips with National Standards," members addressed several questions:

- What are the national standards?
- What is the "vision" of our colleagues who produced them?

- Do we believe in the standards?
- What do they mean for Southeast Georgia?

Background reading was a summary of the standards in the areas of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. A copy is included as an appendix. Discussion focused on the need for standards; the varying expectations of teachers in grades 4, 8, 12, and a university; and the components of a *scenario*, a new vocabulary word to most alliance members.

At the second meeting, "Applying the National Standards in Our Own Classrooms," members divided into language-specific groups. Referring to their own textbooks and the summary of standards, each group selected a content area (geography, for example) and planned activities designed to help introduce, review, or expand upon it in elementary school, middle school, high school, or college classes. They then specified which of the standards in each of the five areas the content and activities addressed.

At the third meeting, "A Step-by-Step Guide and Some Specific Activities," a member serving on the National Standards Committee of the American Association of Teachers of German shared suggestions for specific classroom activities.

In the Future

In 1983, academic alliance members identified concerns that they hoped to address: insufficient sharing of ideas, materials, and problems (55%); and insufficient articulation of programs (50%) (Gaudiani & Krug, 1984, p. 25). For more than 15 years, the Wake County Collaborative and the Southeast Georgia Collaborative have addressed these two primary concerns. When necessary, they have undertaken lobbying to advocate the inclusion and/or articulation of programs. What lies ahead for them and other alliances? The working document of standards for all languages and the draft documents of standards in various foreign languages include descriptors of student performance in communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. By collaborating, alliance members have the potential to help students become proficient in each performance area and to help each other maintain articulation in their programs. They can also advocate maintaining and strengthening these programs and promote the importance of foreign language learning in general.

As co-directors of Academic Alliances in Foreign Languages and Literatures, Anne Fountain and Clara Krug have taken steps to revitalize this national network. In February 1998, at its national conference, "High School to College in Foreign Language Programs," the Modern Language Asso-

ciation (MLA) recognized academic alliances as pioneers in working toward articulation. Alliances are now part of the MLA's national network of articulation projects. The co-directors have compiled a draft copy of a "Directory of Academic Alliances in Foreign Languages and Literatures,"[10] which they will maintain and update as needed. The goals of both the relationship with the MLA network and the directory are re-establishing and/or maintaining contact with academic alliances, helping them maintain contact with each other, and reporting on their accomplishments as they continue to work locally to maintain articulation in foreign language and literature programs.

Notes

1 At the time, Claire Gaudiani was a lecturer in French at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1998, she celebrated her 10th year as President of Connecticut College.

2 In 1997, Ellen Silber relinquished the directorship.

3 This review of the Wake County Collaborative history is based on issues of *Wake Up!*, reports filed with the Southern Regional Education Board, and conversations with alliance members Sylvia Alonso, Jane Cowan, Arlene Malinowski, and Susan Navey-Davis. For current information, contact Susan Navey-Davis at <navey@social.chass.ncsu.edu >.

4 A web-site address is not yet available.

5 Then at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, NJ, Protase Woodford has since retired.

6 For details about ACTFL's *Proficiency Guidelines*, contact C. Edward Scebold, Executive Director, ACTFL, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; phone: (914) 963-8830.

7 Academic Alliances in Georgia were founded with funding from the Foreign Language Association of Georgia, the Georgia Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Georgia Southern University. For current information, contact Jana Sandarg, Professor of Spanish, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA 30490.

8 For additional information, the web site address is < www2.gasou.edu/gsufl/alliance.htm >.

9 W. Ray Cleere is now President of Piedmont College, Demorest, GA.

[10] To request a copy, contact either Anne Fountain, Peace College, Raleigh, NC 27604-1194; phone: 919-508-2203; fax: 919-508-2326; e-mail <fountain@peace.edu>; or Clara Krug, Box 8081, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30460; phone: 912-681-5695; fax: 919-681-0652; e-mail: < ckrug@gsaix2.cc.gasou.edu >.

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Appendix

Standards for Foreign Language Learning

Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1:

Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2:

Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3:

Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1:

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2:

Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1:

Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2:

Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Standard 4.1:

Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2:

Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

Standard 5.1:

Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2:

Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

8
Foreign Language Instruction and Block Scheduling

Linda M. Wallinger
Virginia Department of Education

As educators in the United States struggle to teach an increasingly diverse student population, many ideas to improve instruction and learning have emerged. National standards have been developed in most content areas, and many states are developing their own standards of learning that establish high expectations for student performance. But establishing standards and benchmarks is not enough. Measures must be taken to provide teachers with the time, strategies, and resources necessary to help *all* learners succeed.

Some proponents of educational reform have recommended a restructuring of the school day, often referred to as *block scheduling*. Block scheduling has become very popular in some states. There has been little data collection to indicate the areas of the country where a block schedule is most popular, but teacher comments posted to Internet bulletin boards and other electronic exchanges would indicate highest usage on the East Coast, in the Midwest, and in Canada. In Virginia, where there are approximately 300 high schools, the number of schools operating on the block has increased from one in 1990-1991 to 147 in 1997-1998. Sixty-eight percent of the high schools in Virginia operated on a block schedule in the 1998-99 school year (Virginia Department of Education, 1998). North Carolina also reports a high number of high schools using a block schedule (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1996b).

Usually, the decision of moving to a block schedule is not one made by teachers alone. Rather, the decision rests in the hands of school boards or central office officials, although they may establish committees to study the advantages and disadvantages of their schools' moving to the block. Consequently, teachers within a school may be forced to accept the block, despite the results of the studies or the opinions of professionals and community members. Often the decision to move to a block schedule is based on many factors, including absenteeism, the number of discipline referrals, and the need to offer more opportunities for students to earn credits.

The use of block scheduling has generated wide discussion within the various content areas of high schools. Some teachers embrace the longer class periods that come with this flexible schedule. Others, however, complain about the decreased annual time available for instruction and the fact that they may not see their students regularly or that learning must occur in a very compressed amount of time.

Foreign language teachers have been among the most vocal opponents of block scheduling. While there is ample anecdotal information available to document their opposition to the restructured use of time, there have been few statistical studies conducted to corroborate their perceptions. This article seeks to report the highlights of the qualitative and quantitative data available on the effect of block scheduling on foreign language instruction and learning.

What Is Block Scheduling?

On the block schedule, students generally attend fewer, but longer classes each day. Each class lasts approximately 90 minutes, rather than the traditional 45 or 50 minutes. Students compensate for fewer daily classes by taking more classes over the course of a year. This can be accomplished with either an *alternating-day block schedule* or a *4 x 4 schedule*.

On the alternating-day schedule, frequently referred to as the *A/B block schedule*, students take four longer classes on one day (Day A); and on the alternating day (Day B), they take four different classes. This schedule continues throughout the school year.

On a 4 x 4 schedule, students take the same four classes daily and complete each course in only one semester. At the beginning of the new semester, they enroll in four new courses (Canady, 1994; Canady & Rettig, 1995; Carroll, 1994a, 1994b; de Lopez, 1996; Edwards, 1995; Jones, 1992; Schoenstein, 1995; Scroggins & Karr-Kidwell, 1995).

Block Scheduling and the Total School Program

Joseph Carroll (1994a) is credited with the revival of block scheduling in 1989 with his "Copernican Plan" in the Masconomet Regional School District in Massachusetts. Since that time, schools nationwide have moved to a more flexible use of the time allocated for instruction. During the past 10 years, schools that have moved to a block schedule have been gathering data to document improvements in education. Research supports the following benefits to the total school program:

- **improved average daily attendance rate** (Buckman, King, & Ryan, 1995; Carroll, 1994a; Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Sadowski, 1996; Schoenstein, 1995; Shortt, 1997);
- **improved student grades or an increase in the number of students on the honor roll** (Carroll, 1994a; Edwards, 1995; Pisapia, 1997; Pisapia & Westfall, 1997; Schoenstein, 1995; Shortt, 1997);
- **a decrease in the drop-out rate and an increase in the graduation rate** (Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Shortt, 1997);
- **a decrease in the number of discipline referrals** (Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Shortt, 1997); and
- **reduced stress** (Eineder & Bishop, 1997; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1997; Hurley, 1997a, 1997b; Shortt, 1997).

With the exception of the examination of data related to improved student grades, there is little research that actually documents student achievement on the block schedule as opposed to the traditional schedule. Some researchers consider the data provided by honor roll and student grades as suspect, because they are so subjective. Unlike a standardized test, grades given by teachers can vary greatly and generally have no common basis. Also, as will be explained later, teachers on the block schedule are generally able to cover less material during the course of a year. Consequently, grades may be based on less total material taught.

One recent extensive study did compare end-of-course test performance for schools that moved from a non-blocked schedule to a block schedule. In 1996, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction published a report comparing the results of 10 end-of-course tests from 1993 to 1995, as schools moved from a non-blocked to a block schedule. The tests were for the subjects of English, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, U.S. History, Economics and Legal Political Systems, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Physical Science. The authors acknowledge that the scores did not belong to the same cohort of students, but they felt that student performance as a whole would have been relatively steady over the years. Also, their study did not discriminate between schools that used the alternating-day schedule and those that used the 4 x 4 schedule.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1996a) concluded

- students in block-scheduled schools had end-of-course test scores at least equal to those of students in non-blocked schools;
- after the scores were adjusted for parent education and homework time, block-scheduled schools showed significantly higher end-of-course scores than non-blocked schools in almost all major subjects;

- students completed less homework in most block-scheduled schools; and
- the students in schools with block scheduling tended to come from families where the parents had a lower level of parent education.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1996a) warned that "broad generalizations about the impact of block scheduling should not be made from these data at present" (p. 4). It is also important to note that foreign languages were not included in this study.

Block Scheduling and Foreign Language Instruction

While block scheduling may produce "organizational" benefits for a school as a whole, foreign language teachers have been among the most vocal opponents of block scheduling in surveys and other qualitative studies (Boarman & Kirkpatrick, 1995; de Lopez, 1996; Fairfax County [VA] Public Schools, 1997; Guskey & Kifer, 1995; Hurley, 1997b; Shortt & Thayer, 1995, 1997). Teachers on all forms of the block schedule complained about the difficulty in maintaining students' attention during the longer class periods; the decrease in total instruction time over the course of the academic year; and preparation for Advanced Placement and SAT II tests, which are administered four to six weeks before the end of the school year. Teachers who teach on the alternating-day block feared that the on-again/off-again nature of the schedule interferes with the consistency in instruction.

Teachers on the 4 x 4 schedule have expressed two major concerns: (a) the quantity of information that must be mastered in such a compressed time and (b) the learning gap between courses (de Lopez, 1996; Hurley, 1997b; Sadowski, 1996; Shortt & Thayer, 1997). For example, a student who completed French I the first semester of one year could wait an entire year or longer before having the opportunity to continue in the next level. Espitia (1998) concurred that teaching on the 4 x 4 semester block schedule was very different from teaching on the alternating-day schedule: "There is a difference between the two formats, even if it is somewhat psychological in nature. Meeting with students every other day over the course of an academic school year gives the sense of time. On the other hand, meeting with students on a day-to-day basis over a semester, if not structured appropriately, tends to leave both teacher and students gasping for breath" (p. 45).

Quantitative Studies

Only two statistical studies related directly to foreign language instruction on the block have been located—one conducted by this author (Wallinger, 1998) and the other conducted by Lapkin, Harley, and Hart (1997). In 1997, Lapkin, Harley, and Hart published the results of a study conducted at a middle school in the Carleton, Ontario, Canada, school district. The study investigated the effects of two alternative scheduling models on student performance in French. One teacher in the school taught three 7th-grade French classes, one each of three different models. The first was the traditional model of 40 minutes of instruction per day for a period of 10 months. The remaining two were called compact models: (a) a half day of instruction over a 10-week period (the half-day model), and (b) 80 minutes of instruction per day for 5 months (80-minutes model).

The students in each model were administered a pretest developed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Modern Language Centre staff. The test assessed performance in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The same test was administered as a posttest at the end of the study. Results on the Canadian Achievement Test (CAT) for English language literacy skills were used as covariates in the study.

Results of the study revealed that there was no significant statistical difference in the performance of any of the groups in the skills of listening and speaking. In reading comprehension, the half-day and 80-minute classes performed significantly better than the 40-minute comparison group. On the writing test, the half-day class also scored significantly better than the 40-minute class.

A student survey that accompanied the testing revealed that students felt that the longer periods made speaking and writing in French easier. While this was true for the half-day group, it was at odds with the test results in speaking for all groups and in writing for the 80-minute group. The student survey also indicated that students did not perceive any differences in their skills in listening and reading. However, the test results showed that students on the longer periods performed better in reading comprehension than those in the 40-minute-per-day group.

The survey yielded other information of interest. About 75% of the students in both compact models agreed that it was easier to get to know the teacher, but not their classmates, during the longer classes. Majorities of both groups also thought that they remembered more of what they learned from day to day than in the regular 40-minute periods.

The surveys also yielded criticisms of the longer class periods. "Two-thirds of students in the half-day class and over a third of those in the

80-minute class reported that they got 'too tired' in the longer French periods. Almost 60% of the half-day class and nearly half of the 80-minute class indicated that it was harder to pay attention in the longer French periods" (Lapkin, et al., 1997, p. 6).

Wallinger completed a one-year research study in 1998 in which she administered end-of-course tests to 9th graders in French I who had been instructed on three different schedules: the 4 x 4 semester schedule, the alternating-day schedule, and the daily schedule. Students were tested in the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The Total Reading Scaled Score and Language Scaled Score on the Stanford Achievement Test Series, 9th Edition (1996), were used as covariates to establish preexisting differences among groups. Additional data were gathered related to the amount of actual time that was available to teachers for instruction on the three schedules, as well as the amount of time that teachers expected their students to spend on homework.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that the students who were taught on the daily class schedule had significantly more time available for instruction ($p < .05$) than those taught on either the 4 x 4 schedule or the alternating-day schedule. An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) showed no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the performance of French I students from the three schedules in the skills of speaking, writing, listening, or reading as measured by the end-of-course tests developed by the researcher. Also, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the quantity of homework that teachers assigned to their French I students based on the schedule that was used for instruction.

While the results of the analyses of the end-of-course test scores did not reveal a significant difference in skill performance in listening, speaking, reading, and writing among any of the groups, an additional question emerged as the researcher examined the data gathered. Although there was no significant difference among the *mean* scores on the various skills tests, the researcher noted the extreme variances of the test scores both within and among groups. This phenomenon led to a further analysis to determine whether the use of the *mean* test scores was disguising a pattern of score distribution that might indicate that certain schedules were beneficial to strong students and detrimental to weak students.

A chi-square test was used to determine if scores of the students in each of the treatment groups met expected representation in each quartile of the score distribution. The analysis showed that students instructed on the 4 x 4 schedule were over-represented in the bottom quartile and were observed as expected in the top quartile on the listening and reading tests.

The scores of students instructed on the alternating-day and daily schedules were observed as expected in the bottom quartile, but were overrepresented in the top quartile. For the subjective tests in speaking and writing, the chi-square test did not indicate any unusual score distributions.

The results of these further analyses would seem to corroborate some of the concerns previously expressed by foreign language teachers: that the 4 x 4 schedule may pose a problem for some students, primarily those who have difficulty in French I. One possible explanation for this occurrence is the accelerated pacing found on the 4 x 4 schedule. Due to poor work habits, absences, or lack of comprehension and motivation, some students may fall behind more quickly on the 4 x 4 schedule than on a schedule where classes meet over the extended year.

Qualitative Studies

While only two quantitative studies on foreign languages and the block schedule were uncovered, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1996b) has produced an extensive qualitative study which outlines perceived advantages and disadvantages of the block to foreign language instruction. Among the perceived benefits of block scheduling for foreign languages were (a) more opportunities to offer and take advanced courses because of more class periods and (b) more time for students to internalize the language. The disadvantages of foreign language instruction on the block included (a) less total class time, and therefore less time to cover material; (b) longer time needed to prepare for classes; (c) difficulties in placing transfer students; (d) difficulties in making up work due to absences; (e) difficulties in scheduling Advanced Placement courses; (f) more courses and/or levels to prepare for over the course of the year; (g) the fact that in an alternating-day block, teachers must still teach 150 students over a two-day period, with no resulting decrease in paperwork; (h) the fact that in an alternating-day block, students must still meet six or seven different teachers in different classes and do the accompanying work; (i) more extensive homework assignments for students; (j) student difficulties in paying attention during the longer periods; and (k) student difficulties in keeping up with the faster pace inherent in block scheduling.

Of greatest concern to foreign language teachers in North Carolina (1996b) were (a) the sequencing for foreign language courses so that language study would continue without long time lapses; (b) the availability of courses, especially at the advanced levels, where students were frequently enrolled in advanced courses in other disciplines that would compete with

the same limited number of time slots or when students were preparing to take Advanced Placement tests at the end of their senior year; and (c) the development of language proficiency, which required a long, uninterrupted sequence of language study, which block scheduling did not always support.

Personal communication with R. Schoenstein (June 13, 1996) revealed that foreign language teachers at Wasson H.S. (CO) had similar concerns prior to beginning a 4 x 4 schedule in 1991. They recommended, but did not require, that students take their foreign language courses in consecutive semesters. Most students did follow this plan; however, due to scheduling difficulties, some students were forced to incur gaps in their language study, generally with little or no adverse effect. In another source, Schoenstein (as cited in de Lopez, 1996, p. 13) recommended " that curriculum planners identify exactly where gaps cause[d] problems and not allow them to be scheduled. He [was] adamant in stating that students should take the first two years of language instruction in back-to-back semesters." Additionally, he felt that it was advantageous for the third and fourth years of a language to be studied in consecutive semesters.

Guskey and Kifer (1995) evaluated a block schedule that was in effect at Governor Thomas Johnson High School in Frederick, MD. Their results indicated that student performance on three standardized tests used to measure achievement has remained the same since moving from a traditional schedule to a block schedule. They did, however, acknowledge a concern about sequential courses that may suffer gaps in learning. They believed that additional procedures needed to be established to gather evidence on the effects of learning gaps for sequential courses. Shortt and Thayer (1995) concurred with this belief in their assessment of past, present, and future use of block scheduling.

Hamdy's (1996) doctoral dissertation on the impact of block scheduling on academic achievement and the perceptions of stakeholders indicated that students on a traditional schedule outperformed those on both forms of block schedule in two standardized tests given in the state of Florida: the High School Competency Test and the Florida Writes test. Survey results from administrators indicated that they perceived mathematics and foreign language teachers to be the least happy with the block schedule.

All of the preceding studies provide significant information with regard to the concern of teachers of sequential courses, especially foreign languages, that a block system requires too much information to be mastered in too short a time: "Language retention is an area that needs to be researched. In my experience, students were forced to cover some material

too quickly. In spite of the different structures and activities used to reinforce and spiral language, some students encountered problems with retention" (Steen, as cited in de Lopez, 1996, p. 13).

Davis-Wiley and Cozart (1996) corroborated these findings in a survey of parents and students in high schools in Knox County (TN). Both parents and students expressed concern that too much material was being crammed into too short a period of time and that teachers moved too fast. In particular, they mentioned problems with math, foreign languages, and Advanced Placement courses. Students were worried about remembering material that they had learned so fast and also about the gaps that would occur in the learning. They also felt that they could not cover all the material necessary for Advanced Placement courses and that there was too much homework in AP classes.

This concern about intensity and retention has a basis in studies by Buzan (1991) on memory and recall. He suggested that after 20 to 50 minutes, recall abilities declined and memory-based activities were ineffective. A large degree of second-language learning, especially at the beginning levels, is based on memory and recall; and students do reach a saturation point. The intensity of the courses taught on a block schedule allowed for little time to "digest" the new information. However, if a teacher used a variety of learning activities in the classroom, a large portion of the time could be spent on reinforcement activities.

In personal communication, R. Schoenstein (June 10, 1996) agreed that on a 4 x 4 schedule, teachers are not likely to *cover* the same amount of material as on a traditional schedule. He reported, however, that foreign language teachers at Wasson H.S. (CO) felt that students truly mastered what they did learn. The teachers felt that in the long run, students were more prepared to advance to the next level of language study because they had time to study topics in greater depth, as opposed to the more traditional schedule, where the emphasis had been on "covering" a certain amount of material.

The question of "coverage" is also a factor in preparing students to take national exams, Advanced Placement exams, and university-level placement exams. Typically, these exams test a set of pre-determined criteria based on the *quantity* of information (number of topics covered) to which a student should have been exposed and presumably should have mastered. Foreign language teachers who prepared their students for such examinations voiced concern that the decreased time allotted to instruction in the subject and the emphasis on depth rather than breadth predicted poor test performance: "The amount of material taught is less, and so we

concentrate on language that can be used and handled well by students, working with basic language for communication. We lost time for practicing structure *per se* and time to teach grammar. This is a consideration for student performance on national exams and in placement exams at the university level" (Steen, as cited in de Lopez, 1996).

An extensive survey of nine high schools in the Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools (1997), corroborated many of the concerns expressed in the previous studies related to foreign language learning. Foreign language teachers felt that the longer instructional period produced by a block schedule helped them to (a) vary their instructional strategies, (b) address the various learning styles of their students, (c) integrate instructional technology, (d) teach the curriculum more in depth, (e) work individually with their students, (f) use a variety of assessment techniques, (g) plan for instruction, (h) meet the needs of special education students, and (i) reduce stress. However, they felt that the shorter period produced by a more traditional schedule was more effective in helping them to (a) teach the required material without lowering standards, (b) maintain students' attention, (c) maintain continuity in classroom instruction, and (d) enable students to catch up on their school work after absences.

Conclusion

In spite of the statistical data that would seem to indicate that there are negligible differences in performance on the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing among the students instructed on the three scheduling formats, it is clear from teacher comments that many foreign language teachers remain doubtful about the success of students instructed on the block schedule. It is evident that further research is necessary to determine exactly what it is that continues to make foreign language teachers feel that their students are not learning so much on a block schedule as they did when they were instructed on a daily schedule. Perhaps it is the fact that affective aspects of foreign language learning such as culture, history, and social customs may have to be eliminated as part of the curriculum to make way in the limited time available for instruction for development of the obvious skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Teachers are obviously worried about the sequencing of courses on the 4 x 4 schedule, where attrition may be a factor as students progress from one level of language study to the next. And finally, the issue of Advanced Placement and SAT II tests that are administered prior to the completion of the course is an important consideration.

Yet these factors cannot be ignored. Course sequencing is an important aspect to a long and sequential study of a foreign language. Standardized tests remain an important part of a student's progression from high school to college. And the national standards in foreign language education (National Standards, 1996) include affective components, such as history and customs, in their five goal areas of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Clearly, continued efforts must be made to help foreign language teachers feel successful as they restructure their teaching to fit a reorganization of instructional time.

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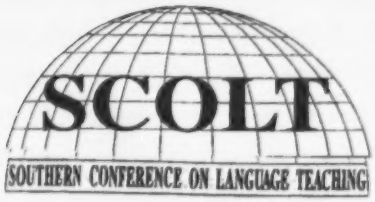

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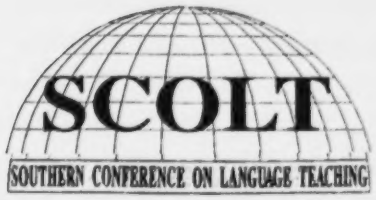

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